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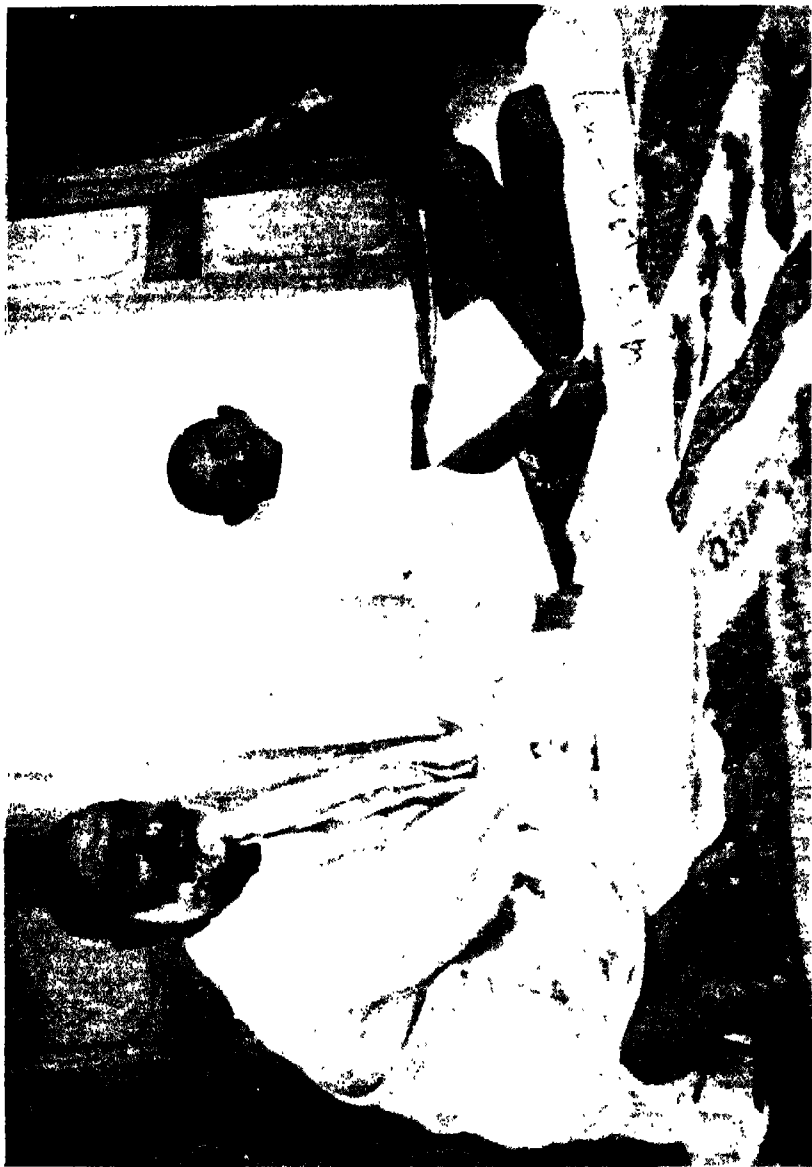
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TO THE HINDUS AND MUSLIMS



Gandhiji with Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan

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TO THE HINDUS AND MUSLIMS

By
MAHATMA GANDHI

Gandhi Series
VOLUME III

EDITED & PUBLISHED
By
ANAND T. HINGORANI
KARACHI

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I like Brand Hingorani's
idea of collecting my
writings under tri-ail
heads. The reader will not
fail to appreciate the
labours he has given to
securing attractive
printing & binding.

mk Gandhi

In short, no pains have been spared to make the volume as well-knit and comprehensive as possible, and I feel sure it will merit the same enthusiastic appreciation at the hands of the reader as the previous two volumes of the *Gandhi Series* have done. Gandhiji's recent writings, as also his last utterance on the communal tangle during his address to the most momentous session of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay on Aug. 8, 1942, just a day before his arrest, have also been included so as to make the volume absolutely up-to-date even in the literal sense of the word.

ANAND T. HINGORANI

August 15, 1942

Upper Sind Colony, Karachi (Sind)

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THE HINDUS AND THE MAHOMEDANS

"If two brothers want to live in peace, is it possible for a third party to separate them? If they were to listen to evil counsels, we would consider them to be foolish. Similarly, we Hindus and Mahomedans would have to blame our folly rather than the English, if we allowed them to put us asunder."

Reader : You have described to me the India of the pre-Mahomedan period, but now we have Mahomedans, Parsis and Christians. How can they be one nation? Hindus and Mahomedans are old enemies. Our very proverbs prove it. Mahomedans turn to the West for worship, whilst Hindus turn to the East. The former look down on the Hindus as idolators. The Hindus worship the cow, the Mahomedans kill her. The Hindus believe in the doctrine of non-killing, the Mahomedans do not. We thus meet with differences at every step. How can India be one nation?

Editor : India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation; they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country. In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals; but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dreamland. The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsis and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow countrymen, and they will have to live in unity, if only for their own interests. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms; nor has it ever been so in India.

doctrine of non-killing and the Mahomedans do not, what, pray, is the duty of the former? It is not written that a follower of the religion of *ahimsa* (non-killing) may kill a fellow-man. For him the way is straight. In order to save one being, he may not kill another. He can only plead—therein lies his sole duty.

But does every Hindu believe in *ahimsa*? Going to the root of the matter, not one man really practises such a religion because we do destroy life. We are said to follow that religion because we want to obtain freedom from liability to kill any kind of life. Generally speaking, we may observe that many Hindus partake of meat and are not, therefore, followers of *ahimsa*. It is, therefore, preposterous to suggest that the two cannot live together amicably because the Hindus believe in *ahimsa* and the Mahomedans do not.

These thoughts are put into our minds by selfish and false religious teachers. The English put the finishing touch. They have a habit of writing history; they pretend to study the manners and customs of all peoples. God has given us a limited mental capacity, but they usurp the function of the Godhead and indulge in novel experiments. They write about their own researches in most laudatory terms and hypnotize us into believing them. We in our ignorance, then, fall at their feet.

Those who do not wish to misunderstand things may read up the Quran, and they will find therein hundreds of passages acceptable to the Hindus; and the Bhagavad Gita contains passages to which not a Mahomedan can take exception. Am I to dislike a Mahomedan because there are passages in the Quran I do not understand or like? It takes two to make a quarrel. If I do not want to quarrel with a Mahomedan, the latter will be powerless to foist a quarrel on me; and, similarly, I should be powerless if a Mahomedan refuses his assistance to quarrel with me. An arm striking the air will become disjointed. If everyone will try to understand the core of his own religion and adhere to it, and will not allow false teachers to dictate to him, there will be no room left for quarrelling.

Reader : But will the English ever allow the two bodies to join hands ?

Editor : This question arises out of your timidity. It betrays our shallowness. If two brothers want to live in peace, is it possible for a third party to separate them ? If they were to listen to evil counsels, we would consider them to be foolish. Similarly, we Hindus and Mahomedans would have to blame our folly rather than the English, if we allowed them to put us asunder. A clay pot would break through impact, if not with one stone, then with another. The way to save the pot is not to keep it away from the danger-point, but to bake it so that no stone would break it. We have, then, to make our hearts of perfectly baked clay. Then, we shall be steeled against all danger. This can be easily done by the Hindus. They are superior in numbers; they pretend that they are more educated; they are, therefore, better able to shield themselves from attack on their amicable relations with the Mahomedans.

There is mutual distrust between the two communities. The Mahomedans, therefore, ask for certain concessions from Lord Morley. Why should the Hindus oppose this ? If the Hindus desisted, the English would notice it, the Mahomedans would gradually begin to trust the Hindus, and brotherliness would be the outcome. We should be ashamed to take our quarrels to the English. Everyone can find out for himself that the Hindus can lose nothing by desisting. That man who has inspired confidence in another has never lost anything in this world.

I do not suggest that the Hindus and Mahomedans will never fight. Two brothers living together often do so. We shall sometimes have our heads broken. Such a thing ought not to be necessary, but all men are not equitable. When people are in a rage, they do many foolish things. These we have to put up with. But when we do quarrel, we certainly do not want to engage counsel and resort to English or any law courts. Two men fight; both have their heads broken, or one only. How shall a third party distribute justice amongst them ? Those who fight may expect to be injured.

THE KHILAFAT

"It is the privilege of friendship to extend the hand of fellowship, and adversity is the crucible in which friendship is tested. Let millions of Hindus show to the Mahomedans that they are one with them in sorrow."

The Muslim Conference of Lucknow has proclaimed Friday, the 17th instant, as a day of fasting and prayer. The preliminaries will be presently arranged. The day is to be called the Khilafat Day. Mr. Andrews' letter shows clearly what the *Khilafat* question is and how just is the case of the Mahomedans. He agrees with the suggestion I have ventured to make, *viz.*, that if justice cannot be obtained for Turkey, Mr. Montague and Lord Chelmsford must resign. But better than resignation, better than protests are the prayers of the just. I, therefore, welcome the Lucknow resolution. Prayer expresses the soul's longing and fasting sets the soul free for efficacious prayer. In my opinion, a national fast and national prayer should be accompanied by suspension of business. I, therefore, without hesitation advise suspension of business, provided it is carried out with calmness and dignity and provided it is entirely voluntary.

It goes without saying that it is the bounden duty of the Hindus and other religious denominations to associate themselves with their Mahomedan brethren. It is the surest and the simplest method of bringing about the Hindu-Mahomedan unity. It is the privilege of friendship to extend the hand of fellowship, and adversity is the crucible in which friendship is tested. Let millions of Hindus show to the Mahomedans that they are one with them in sorrow.

I would respectfully urge the Government to make common cause with the people, and encourage and regulate this peaceful exhibition of their feelings. Let the people not think that the Government will put any obstacles,

directly or indirectly, in their way.

I would urge the modern generation not to regard fasting and prayer with scepticism or distrust. The greatest teachers of the world have derived extraordinary powers for the good of humanity and attained clarity of vision through fasting and prayer. Much of this discipline runs to waste, because instead of being a matter of the heart, it is often resorted to for stage-effect. I would, therefore, warn the bodies of this movement against any such suicidal manœuvring. Let them have a living faith in what they urge or let them drop it. We are now beginning to attract millions of our countrymen. We shall deserve their curses if we consciously lead them astray. Whether Hindus or Mahomedans, we have all got the religious spirit in us. Let it not be undermined by our playing at religion.

KHILAFAT DAY

“Government is an instrument of service only in so far as it is based upon the will and consent of the people. It is an instrument of oppression when it enforces submission at the point of the bayonet.”

The 17th October will long be remembered as a great day in Indian history. That a big demonstration like the one organized for the 17th instant, should have passed off without a hitch reflects the greatest credit on the organizers and is, indeed, a triumph of *satyagraha*. People have come to realize that not by violence but by peaceful combination and sustained effort are great causes to be won. As soon as the people cease to fear force, so soon will Government find it to be useless; and only those free themselves from that fear who are positively unwilling to use it themselves. Those in authority, as a rule, like some exercise of violence from the people. The art of government generally consists in having at one's disposal sufficient force to over-awe people into submission. And a government is an instrument of service only in so far as it is based upon the will and the consent of the people. It is an instrument of oppression when it enforces submission at the point of the bayonet. Oppression, therefore, ceases when people cease to fear the bayonet. And this is *satyagraha*—to hold on to truth in the face of overwhelming odds, whether in the shape of the brute force of a government or the unreasoning prejudice or the petty tyranny of a caste.

The organizers of Khilafat Day seem to have recognized this cardinal principle. They would have played themselves into the hands of their opponents if they had directly or indirectly prompted violence or, as a matter of fact, violence had ensued from the demonstration. The cause of Islam has gained by the peaceful nature of the demonstration. And if Bombay be any

index to the police arrangements in the other places, the police undoubtedly deserve the highest praise, for in Bombay, as in Ahmedabad, so far as the public were concerned, there appeared to be no special precaution taken. There was absence of all show of force. The presence of an extraordinary police force or the military always irritates a mob. The organizers deserve equal credit for avoiding mass meetings and everything tending to bring together large crowds of ignorant and irresponsible people.

The *Khilafat* is a difficult question. It has been rendered more complex by secret treaties. But it is not yet beyond hope. Eight millions of human beings, when justice is on their side, can make themselves felt anywhere. Our Mahomedan friends have, therefore, to recognize their own strength. The Friday demonstration, great though it was, may easily be frittered away if it is not followed up by sustained and intelligent effort. The Government must realize what the Mahomedan feeling is. And they will only realize it, when they see earnest effort and a due measure of suffering on the part of those who claim to feel so intensely. Continued pressure of enlightened public opinion can but help His Majesty's ministers, if they wish to be helped, in securing an honourable settlement of this knotty question. There must be no bluster, no theatricals, no declamation, no self-advertisement. There must be quiet and honest work.

There were resolutions passed at some meetings to the effect that Mahomedans will be unable to participate in peace rejoicings if the *Khilafat* question is not settled on principles of justice, or rather in accordance with the Mahomedan sentiment. This is the right of the subject. But if it is the general wish, it must be clearly expressed, and not at unorganized meetings.

There was, too, the question of boycott brought up by some. We have expressed ourselves on this matter in no uncertain terms. We do not believe in boycott, because it breeds ill-will and it is mostly ineffective. Boycott of goods is a subterfuge for boycott of the Government. We hate all subterfuge. If a case is made out for

boycotting the Government, we would not hesitate to support it. But boycott then spells disloyalty. Loyalty is not an immutable principle. It is mutual understanding. A government that is loyal to the governed commands their loyalty as a matter of course. When our Government ceases to be loyal, *i.e.*, it becomes systematically unjust or oppressive, we should unhesitatingly declare our disloyalty and withdraw and advise withdrawal of all forms of support of the Government. That is a form of boycott which we would deem it a duty to proclaim, should the occasion arise. But boycott of British goods, whilst we retain the British connection, is, in our opinion, a blunder of the first magnitude.

But our Mahomedan friends have far too sacred a cause to be trifled with by the use of a questionable weapon like boycott. And they and the world now know that theirs is a cause not of the eight crore Mahomedans, but of the twenty-two crore Hindus also. For, the 17th October has shown that the Hindu-Mahomedan bond is a reality and that it is a bond that is ever growing tighter. And a strong and united India cannot fail to be listened to with respect and attention by the allies of Great Britain.

ALL-INDIA KHILAFAT CONFERENCE

“We talk of Hindu-Mahomedan unity. It would be an empty phrase if the Hindus hold aloof from the Mahomedans when their vital interests were at stake.”

Presiding over the session of the All-India Khilafat Conference held at Delhi on 24th November, Gandhiji said:

It ought not to appear strange for Hindus to be on the same platform as the Mahomedans in a matter that specially and solely affects the Mahomedans. After all, the test of friendship is true assistance in adversity, and whatever we are, Hindus, Parsis, Christians or Jews, if we wish to live as one nation, surely the interest of any of us must be the interest of all. The only deciding consideration can be the justice of a particular cause. The Prime Minister of England and whole host of distinguished ex-officials are witnesses to the justice of the Muslim cause. We talk of the Hindu-Mahomedan unity. It would be an empty phrase if the Hindus hold aloof from the Mahomedans when their vital interests were at stake. Some have suggested that we, Hindus, can assist our Mahomedan countrymen only on conditions. Conditional assistance is like adulterated cement which does not bind. The only question, therefore, is how to help. The Khilafat Conference has come to the decision not to participate in the forthcoming peace celebrations. I think that it is a proper decision. Peace celebrations can have no meaning for India whilst a vital part of the peace, affecting one-fourth of India's population, remains undeclared. Eight crores of Mahomedans are deeply interested in the peace terms affecting the *Khilafat*. It is improper to ask them to celebrate peace whilst the fate of the *Khilafat* hangs in the balance. To ask India to celebrate peace, whilst the *Khilafat* question remains unsettled, is like expecting France to celebrate

peace, pending the settlement of Alsace-Lorraine. That Turkey is outside India does not affect the comparison. England is as much a Mahomedan and Hindu power, as it is a Christian power, and if India be a partner in the Empire, then Mahomedan sentiment deserves as much placating as any other. It would, therefore, be the most seeming thing for His Excellency, the Viceroy, to postpone the peace celebrations pending a satisfactory settlement of the *Khilafat* question.

It is a question which, indeed, affects the honour of England—the pledged word of the Prime Minister. What are riches, power, and military renown worth, if that honour become sullied? I was, therefore, deeply pained to see the telegraphic summary of the Prime Minister's speech which seemed unnecessarily to wound Muslim susceptibility and to forecast a settlement of the *Khilafat* question in contradiction of his own solemn word, given with due deliberation and at a time when that word steadied the Mahomedan loyalty and possibly stimulated recruiting among the war-like Mahomedans. I shall still hope that wiser counsels will prevail and justice be done to the Mahomedan claim. Should, however, the worst happen, the *Khilafat* Committee last night decided to advise Mahomedans to withdraw co-operation from the Government. I was privileged to be present at both the Subjects Committee and the general meetings. I take the liberty of warning the Government of the solemnity of the occasion and the seriousness of the decision. I know that withdrawal of co-operation is a grave thing and a big thing. It requires ability to suffer. I know, too, that it is the right of a citizen to withdraw his co-operation from the State, when that co-operation means his degradation. It is a tangible form of showing one's displeasure at the acts of one's Government. One may, therefore, hope that the Imperial Government will recognize the gravity of the situation. But from Non-co-operation to Boycott is a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous.

The Committee took last night a decision by a majority of votes in favour of boycott of British goods,

if the *Khilafat* question was not satisfactorily settled. Boycott is a form of revenge, and talking of its being able to help us to secure a just solution we have to create a world opinion. I venture to suggest to my Mahomedan friends that they will not create a world opinion in their favour by proclaiming boycott of British goods for other goods, and, in practice, it is bound to break down. Moreover, the suggested boycott is a confession of weakness. You want strength, not weakness, to be able successfully to deal with all the questions. I, therefore, hope that the Khilafat Committee will retrace its steps and after mature consideration cancel the boycott resolution. In tackling this big question, calmness, patience and the strictest adherence to facts are needed. It is not enough that there is no violence. Indeed, a violent speech is often as injurious as a violent deed. And I am sure that you will not spoil a cause that is just and sacred by any hasty word or action.

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

"Non-co-operation becomes a duty when co-operation means degradation or humiliation or an injury to one's cherished religious sentiment."

Gandhiji issued the following manifesto regarding the Khilafat question :

The *Khilafat* question has now become a question of questions. It has become an Imperial question of the first magnitude.

The Great Prelates of England and the Mahomedan leaders combined have brought the question to the fore. The Prelates threw down the challenge. The Muslim leaders have taken it up.

I trust that the Hindus will realize that the *Khilafat* question overshadows the Reforms and everything else.

If the Muslim claim was unjust apart from the Muslim scriptures, one might hesitate to support it merely on scriptural authority. But when a just claim is supported by scriptures, it becomes irresistible.

Briefly put, the claim is that the Turks should retain European Turkey subject to full guarantees for the protection of non-Muslim races under the Turkish Empire and that the Sultan should control the Holy Places of Islam and should have suzerainty over Jazirat-ul-Arab, *i.e.*, Arabia as defined by the Muslim *savants*, subject to self-governing rights being given to the Arabs if they so desire. This was what was promised by Mr. Lloyd George and this was what Lord Hardinge had contemplated. The Mahomedan soldiers would not have fought to deprive Turkey of her possessions. To deprive the *Khalif* of the suzerainty of Arabia is to reduce the *Khilafat* to a nullity.

To restore to Turkey subject to necessary guarantees, what was hers before War, is a Christian solution. To

wrest any of her possessions from her for the sake of punishing her is a gun-powder solution. The Allies or England in the hour of triumph must be scrupulously just. To reduce the Turks to impotence would be not only unjust. It would be a breach of solemn declarations and promises. It is to be wished that the Viceroy will take his courage in both his hands and place himself at the head of the *Khilafat* agitation as Lord Hardinge did at the time of the South African Passive Resistance struggle, and thus like his predecessor give a clear and emphatic direction to an agitation which, under impulsive or faulty leadership, may lead to disastrous consequences.

But the situation rests more with us Hindus and Mahomedans than with the Viceroy, and still more with the Muslim leaders than with the Hindus or the Viceroy.

There are signs already of impatience on the part of Muslim friends, and impatience may any day be reduced to madness; and the latter must inevitably lead to violence. And I wish I could persuade every one to see that violence is suicide.

Supposing the Muslim demands are not granted by the Allies or say England! I see nothing but hope in Mr. Montagu's brave defence of the Muslim position and Mr. Lloyd George's interpretation of his own declaration. True, the latter is halting; but he can secure full justice under it. But we must suppose the worst and expect and strive for the best. How to strive is the question.

The barbarous method is warfare, open or secret. This must be ruled out, if only because it is impracticable. If I could but persuade every one that it is always bad, we should gain all lawful ends much quicker. The power, that an individual or a nation forswearing violence generates, is a power that is irresistible. But my argument to-day against violence is based upon pure expedience, *i.e.*, its utter futility.

Non-co-operation is, therefore, the only remedy left open to us. It is the cleanest remedy, as it is the most effective when it is absolutely free from all violence. It becomes a duty when co-operation means degradation

or humiliation or an injury to one's cherished religious sentiment. England cannot accept a meek submission by us to an unjust usurpation of rights which to Mussalmans mean matter of life and death. We may, therefore, begin at the top as also the bottom. Those who are holding offices of honour or emolument ought to give them up. Those who belong to the menial services under Government should do likewise. Non-co-operation does not apply to services under private individuals. I cannot approve of the threat of ostracism against those who do not adopt the remedy of Non-co-operation. It is only a voluntary withdrawal which is effective. For, voluntary withdrawal alone is a test of popular feeling and dissatisfaction. Advice to the soldiers to refuse to serve is premature. It is the last, not the first step. We should be entitled to take that step when the Viceroy, the Secretary of State and the Premier leave us. Moreover, every step in withdrawing co-operation has to be taken with the greatest deliberation. We must proceed slowly so as to ensure retention of self-control under the fiercest heat.

I will co-operate whole-heartedly with the Muslim friends in the prosecution of their just demands so long as they act with sufficient restraint, and so long as I feel sure that they do not wish to resort to or countenance violence. I should cease to co-operate and advise every Hindu, and for that matter every one else, to cease to co-operate, the moment there was violence actually done, advised or countenanced. I would, therefore, urge upon all speakers the exercise of the greatest restraint under the gravest provocation. There is certainty of victory if firmness is combined with gentleness. The cause is doomed if anger, hatred, ill-will, recklessness and finally violence are to reign supreme. I shall resist them with my life, even if I should stand alone. My goal is friendship with the world and I can combine the greatest love with the greatest opposition to wrong.

PLEDGES BROKEN

"The terms of the so-called peace with Turkey, if they are to last, will be a monument of human arrogance and man-made injustice. To attempt to crush the spirit of a brave and gallant race, because it has lost in the fortunes of war, is a triumph not of humanity but a demonstration of inhumanity."

The long-expected peace terms¹ regarding Turkey have been received. In my humble opinion, they are humiliating to the Supreme Council, to the British ministers, and, if as a Hindu with deep reverence for Christianity I may say so, a denial of Christ's teachings. Turkey, broken down and torn with dissensions within, may submit to the arrogant disposal of herself, and Indian Mahomedans may out of fear do likewise. Hindus out of fear, apathy or want of appreciation of the situation, may refuse to help their Mahomedan brethren in their hour of peril. The fact remains that a solemn promise of the Prime Minister of England has been wantonly broken. I will say nothing about President Wilson's Fourteen Points, for they seem now to be entirely forgotten as a day's wonder. It is a matter of deep sorrow that the Government of India *Communiqué* offers a defence of the terms, calls them a fulfilment of Mr. Lloyd George's pledge of 5th January, 1918, and yet apologizes for their defective nature and appeals to the Mahomedans of India, as if to mock them, that they would accept the terms with quiet resignation. The mask that veils the hypocrisy is too thin to deceive anybody. It would have been dignified if the *Communiqué* had boldly admitted Mr. Lloyd George's mistake in having made the promise referred to. As it is, the claim of fulfilment of the promise only adds to the irritation caused by its glaring breach. What is the use of the Viceroy saying: "The question of the

¹The terms subsequently forced on Turkey at Sevres.

Khilafat is one for the Mahomedans and Mahomedans only, and that with their free choice in the matter Government have no desire to interfere," while the *Khalif's* dominions are ruthlessly dismembered, his control of the Holy Places of Islam shamelessly taken away from him and he himself reduced to utter impotence in his own palace, which can no longer be called a palace but which can be more fitly described as a prison? No wonder, His Excellency fears that the peace includes "terms which must be painful to all Muslims." Why should he insult Muslim intelligence by sending the Mussalmans of India a message of encouragement and sympathy? Are they expected to find encouragement in the cruel recital of the arrogant terms or in a remembrance of "the splendid response" made by them to the call of the King "in the day of the Empire's need?" It ill-becomes His Excellency to talk of the triumph of those ideals of justice and humanity for which the Allies fought. Indeed, the terms of the so-called peace with Turkey, if they are to last, will be a monument of human arrogance and man-made injustice. To attempt to crush the spirit of a brave and gallant race, because it has lost in the fortunes of war, is a triumph not of humanity but a demonstration of inhumanity. And if Turkey enjoyed the closest ties of friendship with Great Britain before the War, Great Britain has certainly made ample reparation for her mistake by having made the largest contribution to the humiliation of Turkey. It is insufferable, therefore, when the Viceroy feels confident that with the conclusion of this new treaty that friendship will quickly take life again and a Turkey regenerate, full of hope and strength, will stand forth in the future, as in the past, a pillar of the Islamic faith. The Viceregal message audaciously concludes: "This thought will, I trust, strengthen you to accept the peace terms with resignation, courage and fortitude and to keep your loyalty towards the Crown bright and untarnished as it has been for so many generations." If Muslim loyalty remains untarnished, it will certainly not be for want of effort on the part of the Government of India to put the heaviest strain upon it, but it will remain so

because the Mahomedans realize their own strength—the strength in the knowledge that their cause is just, and that they have got the power to vindicate justice in spite of the aberration suffered by Great Britain under a Prime Minister whom continued power has made as reckless in making promises as in breaking them.

Whilst, therefore, I admit that there is nothing either in the peace terms or in the Viceregal message covering them to inspire Mahomedans and Indians in general with confidence or hope, I venture to suggest that there is no cause for despair or anger. Now is the time for Mahomedans to retain absolute self-control, to unite their forces and, weak though they are, with firm faith in God to carry on the struggle with redoubled vigour till justice is done. If India—both Hindu and Mahomedan—can act as one man and can withdraw her partnership in this crime against humanity which the peace terms represent, she will soon secure a revision of the treaty and give herself and the Empire at least, if not the world, a lasting peace. There is no doubt that the struggle would be bitter, sharp and possibly prolonged, but it is worth all the sacrifice that it is likely to call forth. Both the Mussalmans and the Hindus are on their trial. Is the humiliation of the *Khilafat* a matter of concern to the former? And if it is, are they prepared to exercise restraint, religiously refrain from violence and practise Non-co-operation without counting the material loss it may entail upon the community? Do the Hindus honestly feel for their Mahomedan brethren to the extent of sharing their sufferings to the fullest extent? The answer to these questions, and not the peace terms, will finally decide the fate of the *Khilafat*.

THE MAHOMEDAN DECISION

"In my opinion, the best way to prevent India from becoming the battle-ground between the forces of Islam and those of the English is for Hindus to make Non-co-operation a complete and immediate success; and I have little doubt that, if the Mahomedans remain true to their declared intention and are able to exercise self-restraint and make sacrifices, the Hindus will 'play the game' and join them in the campaign of Non-co-operation."

The *Khilafat* meeting at Allahabad has unanimously reaffirmed the principle of Non-co-operation and appointed an executive committee to lay down and enforce a detailed programme. This meeting was preceded by a joint Hindu-Mahomedan meeting at which Hindu leaders were invited to give their views. Mrs. Besant, the Hon'ble Pandit Malaviyaji, the Hon'bles Dr. Sapru, Moti Lal Nehru, Chintamani and others were present at the meeting. It was a wise step on the part of the Khilafat Committee to invite Hindus representing all shades of thought to give them the benefit of their advice. Mrs. Besant and Dr. Sapru strongly dissuaded the Mahomedans present from the policy of Non-co-operation. The other Hindu speakers made non-committal speeches. Whilst the other Hindu speakers approved of the principle of Non-co-operation in theory, they saw many practical difficulties and they feared also complications arising from Mahomedans welcoming an Afghan invasion of India. The Mahomedan speakers gave the fullest and frankest assurances that they would fight to a man any invader who wanted to conquer India, but they were equally frank in asserting that any invasion from without, undertaken with a view to uphold the prestige of Islam and to vindicate justice, would have their full sympathy, if not their actual support. It is easy enough to understand and justify the Hindu caution. It is difficult to resist the Mahomedan

position. In my opinion, the best way to prevent India from becoming the battle-ground between the forces of Islam and those of the English is for Hindus to make Non-co-operation a complete and immediate success; and I have little doubt that, if the Mahomedans remain true to their declared intention and are able to exercise self-restraint and make sacrifices, the Hindus will 'play the game' and join them in the campaign of Non-co-operation. I feel equally certain that the Hindus will not assist Mahomedans in promoting or bringing about an armed conflict between the British Government and their allies and Afghanistan. British forces are too well organized to admit of any successful invasion of the Indian frontier. The only way, therefore, the Mahomedans can carry on an effective struggle, on behalf of the honour of Islam, is to take up Non-co-operation in real earnest. It will not only be completely effective if it is adopted by the people on an extensive scale, but it will also provide full scope for individual conscience. If I cannot bear an injustice done by an individual or a corporation, and if I am directly instrumental in upholding that individual or corporation, I must answer for it before my Maker; but I have done all it is humanly possible for me to do consistently with the moral code that refuses to injure even the wrong-doer, if I cease to support the injustice in the manner described above. In applying, therefore, such a great force, there should be no temper shown. Non-co-operation must be and remain absolutely a voluntary effort. The whole thing, then, depends upon Mahomedans themselves. If they will but help themselves, Hindu help will come and the Government, great and mighty though it is, will have to bend before this irresistible force. No Government can possibly withstand the bloodless opposition of a whole nation.

THE NON-CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

"As I consider the Muslim claim to be intrinsically just, I propose to go with them to the extent of fullest Non-co-operation.....But I would not go with them in any campaign of violence. I could not help them in promoting, for instance, an invasion of India through Afghanistan or otherwise for the purpose of forcing better peace terms."

After dealing with certain misunderstandings and misconceptions about the Non-co-operation Committee, appointed by the Khilafat Committee at Allahabad, Gandhiji referred to its representative character and wrote :

For the masses and for internal work, however, the Committee is the most representative. It is difficult, perhaps, to find two men more representative of Mussalman opinion than Shaukat Ali and Hasrat Mohani. The others, though less known, have been chosen for the qualities of strength, perseverance, patience, calmness, truthfulness, courage under difficulty and sacrifice, believed to be possessed by them. It has been suggested that I am to lead the movement. The statement is only partially true. I say this not out of humility merely, but it is a literal fact. If the belief gains ground that I am leading the movement, it may prove fatal to it. I am leading the movement in the sense that I am the adviser whose advice is most acceptable to-day, and who has the determination not surpassed by anybody to carry out the programme of Non-co-operation. But I do not pretend to represent Mussalman opinion. I can only try to interpret it. I could not stand alone and expect to carry the Mussalman masses with me. I should be very properly hooted out by a mixed Mussalman audience if I tried to make a point against the best Mussalman opinion in matters of religion. But if I were a Mussalman, I would not mind contesting issues before a Mussalman

meeting in the face of heavy odds against me. I consider myself to be a sagacious worker and my sagacity means no more and no less than a fine perception of my limitations. I hope I never travel beyond my limits. Certainly, I have never done so consciously. It is necessary for every intelligent Mussalman to bear in mind my limitations and the scope of my function. Ignorance is likely to prove fatal to the success of the movement. My connection with it must not stupefy workers into indolence or indifference. My connection should mean, if it is to be productive of good results, greater watchfulness, greater sense of responsibility, greater capacity and willingness for work and greater efficiency. I can think out plans, but execution must ever rest with Mussalman workers. The movement must be worked and led by them with the assistance of friends like me but also without, if need be. I must not be expected to make Non-co-operators; Mussalman leaders alone can make them. No amount of sacrifice on my part will produce in the Mussalman world the spirit of Non-co-operation, *i.e.*, sacrifice in a matter of religion. The Mussalman leaders will have to show it in their own persons before the masses evolve it.

And now the question, why there are no Hindu leaders on the Committee, is easily answered. The supreme Committee can only be purely Mussalman. My presence, too, I consider as an evil, but it is a necessary evil because of my qualifications. I have specialized in Non-co-operation. I have successfully experimented with it. The resolution about Non-co-operation was conceived by me at the Conference at Delhi. I am on the Committee, therefore, as a specialist and not because I am a Hindu. My function is, therefore, of an adviser merely. That I happen to be a staunch Hindu with the conviction that every Hindu should consider it to be his duty to go with the Mussalmans the full length in Non-co-operation, is no doubt an advantage to the Committee. But that advantage was at its disposal whether I was on it or not.

Whilst I am considering the Hindu connection with the *Khilafat* movement, even at the risk of repetition,

I would like to clear up my own position. As I consider the Muslim claim to be intrinsically (as distinguished from religiously) just, I propose to go with them to the extent of fullest Non-co-operation. And I consider it to be perfectly consistent with my loyalty to the British connection. But I would not go with the Mussalmans in any campaign of violence. I could not help them in promoting, for instance, an invasion of India through Afghanistan or otherwise for the purpose of forcing better peace terms. It is, I hold, the duty of every Hindu to resist any inroad on India even for the purpose specified, as it is his duty to help his Mussalman brethren to satisfy their just demands by means of Non-co-operation or other form of suffering, no matter how great, so long as it does not involve loss of India's liberty or inflicting of violence on any person. And I have thrown myself whole-heartedly into the Non-co-operation movement if only because I want to prevent any such armed conflict.

THE TURKISH QUESTION

"To-day we are striving for *Swaraj* within the Empire in the hope that England will in the end prove true, and for independence if she fails. But when it is incontestably proved that Britain seeks to destroy Turkey, India's only choice must be independence."

If we mean really well by our Mussalman brethren, we must sympathize with them over the movement going on in Europe to destroy Turkish nationalism. It is a thousand pities that the British Government is secretly or openly leading the movement. Let Hindus not be frightened by Pan-Islamism. It is not, it need not be, anti-Indian or anti-Hindu. Mussalmans must wish well to every Mussalman state, and even assist any such state, if it is undeservedly in peril. And Hindus, if they are true friends of Mussalmans, cannot but share the latter's feelings. We must, therefore, co-operate with our Mussalman brethren in their attempt to save the Turkish Empire in Europe from extinction.

Hindus may not, then, be agitated when Mussalmans become alarmed at the slightest hint that the British Government might openly join the Greeks against the Turkish Government in Angora. If British should go so mad, India cannot possibly help the British Government in any such design upon Turkey. It would be tantamount to a war with Islam.

England has her choice. She can no longer hold the awakened Hindus and Mussalmans as slaves. If India is to remain equal partner with every other member of the Empire, India's voting strength must be infinitely superior to that of any other member. In a free Commonwealth, every partner has as much right to retire if the rest go wrong, as it is his duty to remain so long as the rest are faithful to certain common principles. If India votes wrong, England can retire from partnership, as every other partner can. Thus, the centre of equili-

brium must shift to India rather than remain in England, when India has come into her own. That is my meaning of *Swaraj* within the Empire. Brute force must be ruled out of account in all deliberations. Reference must be had always to Reason and never to the Sword.

And as with England, so with India. The latter, too, has her choice. To-day, we are striving for *Swaraj* within the Empire in the hope that England will in the end prove true, and for Independence if she fails. But when it is incontestably proved that Britain seeks to destroy Turkey, India's only choice must be Independence. For Mussalmans, when Turkey's existence, such as it is, is threatened, there is no looking back. They would draw the sword if they could, and perish or rise victorious with the brave Turks. But if, as is certain, thanks to the policy of the Government of India, they cannot declare war against the British Government, they can at least forswear allegiance to a government which wickedly goes to war against Turkey. The duty of the Hindus is no less clear. If we still fear and distrust the Mussalmans, we must side with the British and prolong our slavery. If we are brave and religious enough not to fear the Mussalmans, our countrymen, and if we have the wisdom to trust them, we must make common cause with the Mussalmans in every peaceful and truthful method to secure Indian independence. For a Hindu, as I conceive Hinduism to be, whether for independence or for *Swaraj* within the Empire, there is no road but Non-violent Non-co-operation. India can have dominion or independent status to-day, if India learns and assimilates the secret and the invincible power of non-violence. When she has learnt that lesson, she is ready to take up all the stages of Non-co-operation, including non-payment of taxes. India is not ready to-day, but if we would be prepared to frustrate every plot that may be hatched for the destruction of Turkey or for prolonging our subjection, we must secure an atmosphere of enlightened non-violence as fast as possible, not the non-violence of the weak but the non-violence of the strong, who would disdain to kill but would gladly die for the vindication of truth.

THE ARREST OF ALI BROTHERS

"The more we suffer and the more of us suffer, the nearer we are to our cherished goal. The earlier and more clearly we recognize that it is not big meetings and demonstrations that would give us victory but quiet suffering, the earlier and more certain will be our victory."

Gandhiji addressed the following open letter to the Mussalmans of India on the arrest of the Ali Brothers :

Dear Countrymen,—Whilst the arrest of Maulanas Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali has touched every Indian heart, I know what it has meant to you. The brave Brothers are staunch lovers of their country, but they are Mussalmans first and everything else after, and it must be so with every religiously minded man. The Brothers have for years past represented all that is best and noblest in Islam. No two Mussalmans have done more than they to raise the status of Islam in India. They have promoted the cause of the *Khilafat* as no two other Mussalmans of India have. For they have been true and they dared to tell what they felt even in their internment in Chindwara. Their long internment did not demoralize or weaken them. They came out just as brave as they went in. And since their discharge from internment, they have shown themselves true nationalists and you have taken pride in their being so.

The Brothers have, by their simplicity, humility and inexhaustible energy, fired the imagination of the masses as no other Mussalman has. All these qualities have endeared them to you. You regard them as your ideal men. You are, therefore, sorry for their separation from you. Many besides you miss their genial faces. For me they had become inseparable. I seem to be without my arms. For anything connected with Mussalmans, Shaukat Ali was my guide and friend. He never

once misled me. His judgment was sound and unerring in most cases. With the Brothers among us, I felt safe about Hindu-Muslim unity whose work they understood as few of us have.

But whilst we all miss them, we must not give way to grief or dejection. We must learn, each one of us, to stand alone. God only is our infallible and eternal Guide. To be dejected is not only not to have known the Brothers, but it is, if I may venture to say so, not to know what religion is. For, do we not learn in all religions that the spirit of the dear ones abides with us even when they physically leave us? Not only is the spirit of the Brothers with us, but they are serving better by their suffering than if they were in our midst, giving us some of their courage, hope, and energy. The secret of non-violence and non-co-operation lies in our realizing that it is through suffering that we are to attain our goal. What is the renunciation of titles, councils, law courts, and schools, but a measure, very slight indeed, of suffering. That preliminary renunciation is a prelude to the larger suffering—the hardships of a gaol life and even the final consummation on the gallows—if need be. The more we suffer and the more of us suffer, the nearer we are to our cherished goal. The earlier and more clearly we recognize that it is not big meetings and demonstrations that would give us victory but quiet suffering, the earlier and more certain will be our victory.

I have made your cause my own because I believe it to be just. *Khilafat*, I have understood from your best men, is an ideal. You are not fighting to sustain any wrong or even misrule. You are backing the Turks because they represent the gentlemen of Europe, and because the European, and especially the English, prejudice against them is not because the Turks are worse than others as men, but because they are Mussalmans and will not assimilate the modern spirit of exploitation of weaker people and their lands. In fighting for the Turks, you are fighting to raise the dignity and the purity of your own faith.

You have naturally, therefore, chosen pure methods to attain your end. It cannot be denied that both Mussalmans and Hindus have lost much in moral stamina. Both of us have become poor representatives of our respective faiths. Instead of each one of us becoming a true child of God, we expect others to live our religion and even to die for us. But we have now chosen a method that compels us to turn, each one of us, our face towards God. Non-co-operation presumes that our opponent, with whom we non-co-operate, resorts to methods which are as questionable as the purpose he seeks to fulfil by such methods. We shall, therefore, find favour in the sight of God only by choosing methods which are different in kind from those of our opponents. This is a big claim we have made for ourselves, and we can attain success within the short time appointed by us, only if our methods are in reality radically different from those of the Government. Hence, the foundation of our movement rests on complete non-violence, whereas violence is the final refuge of the Government. And as no energy can be created without resistance, our non-resistance to Government violence must bring the latter to a standstill. But our non-violence, to be true, must be in word, thought and deed. It makes no difference that with you non-violence is an expedience. Whilst it lasts, you cannot consistently with your pledge harbour designs of violence. On the contrary, we must have implicit faith in our programme of non-violence which presupposes perfect accord between thought, word, and deed. I would like every Mussalman to realize, whilst the occasion for anger is the greatest, that by non-violence alone can we gain complete victory even during this year.

Nor is non-violence a visionary programme. Just imagine what the united resolve of seven crores of Mussalmans (not to count the Hindus) must mean. Should we not have succeeded already if all the titled men had given up their titles, all the lawyers had suspended their practice and all the school boys had left their schools and all had boycotted Councils? But we must recognize that with many of us flesh has proved too weak. Seven

crores are called Mussalmans, and twenty-two crores are called Hindus, but only a few are true Mussalmans or true Hindus. Therefore, if we have not gained our purpose, the cause lies within us. And if ours is, as we claim it is, a religious struggle, we dare not become impatient, save with ourselves, not even against one another.

The Brothers, I am satisfied, are as innocent as I claim I am of incitement to violence. Theirs, therefore, is a spotless offering. They have done all in their power for Islam and their country. Now, if the *Khilafat* or the Punjab wrongs are not redressed and *Swaraj* is not established during this year, the fault will be yours and mine. We must remain non-violent, but we must not be passive. We must repeat the formula of the Brothers regarding the duty of soldiers and invite imprisonment. We need not think that the struggle cannot go on without even the best of us. If it cannot, we are neither fit for *Swaraj*, nor for redressing the *Khilafat* and the Punjab wrongs. We must declare from a thousand platforms that it is sinful for any Mussalman or Hindu to serve the existing Government, whether as a soldier or in any capacity whatsoever.

Above all, we must concentrate on complete boycott of foreign cloth whether British, Japanese, American or French, or any other, and begin, if we have not already done so, to introduce spinning-wheels and hand-loom in our own homes and manufacture all the cloth we need. This will be at once a test of our belief in non-violence for our country's freedom and for saving the *Khilafat*. It will be a test also of Hindu-Muslim unity, and it will be a universal test of our faith in our own programme. I repeat my conviction that we can achieve our full purpose within one month of a complete boycott of foreign cloth. For we are then in a position, having confidence in our ability to control forces of violence, to offer civil disobedience if it is at all found necessary.

I can, therefore, find no balm for the deep wounds inflicted upon you by the Government other than non-

violence translated into action by boycott of foreign cloth and manufacture of cloth in our own homes.

I am,
Your friend and comrade,
M. K. GANDHI

WHAT OF THE KHILAFAT?

"It is the suffering of the pure and god-fearing which will tell, not the bluster of the rabble. The purer India becomes, the stronger she becomes. Purity is the only weapon of the weak in body."

Several Mussalman friends have said:

"Your programme is good for *Swaraj* but it is too slow to be good enough for saving the *Khilafat*. The *Khilafat* question will be solved in a few months and whatever can be done must be done now."

Let us examine the question. The cause of the *Khilafat*, thank God, is safe in the hands of Ghazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha. He has retrieved the prestige of the *Khilafat* as no Mussalman of modern times has done. India has, in my opinion, helped not much by her money, though that has meant something, but by Hindu-Muslim unity and by telling the Government in the plainest terms possible that India will have nothing to do with the Government and will declare complete independence if England persists in her anti-Turk policy and exploits India's resources against the Turks. The greater the strength in that declaration, the greater becomes the prestige of Islam and the greater the power of Mustafa Kamal Pasha. Some people think that mere temporary embarrassment of the Government by a few thousand men, irrespective of qualification, going to jail will make the Government yield to our wishes. Let us not underrate the power of Government. I am sure that the Government does possess as yet the power to crush the spirit of violence. And it is nothing but violence to go to jail anyhow. It is the suffering of the pure and god-fearing which will tell, not the bluster of the rabble. The purer India becomes, the stronger she becomes. Purity is the only weapon of the weak in body. The stronger in

body in their insolence often mobilize their 'hard fibre' and seek to usurp the very function of the Almighty. But when that 'hard fibre' comes in contact not with its like but with the exact opposite, it has nothing to work against. A solid body can only move on and against another solid body. You cannot build castles in the air. Therefore, the impatient Mussalmans must see the obvious truth that the little disorganized bluster of the rabble, whether it expresses itself by going to jail or by burning the buildings or by making noisy demonstrations, will be no match for the organized insolence of the 'hard fibre' of 'the most determined people of the world.' This terrific insolence can only be met by the utter humility of the pure and the meek. God helps the helpless, not those who believe they can do something. Every page of the Quran teaches me, a non-Muslim, this supreme lesson. Every *sūrat* of the Quran begins in the name of God the Compassionate and the Merciful. Let us, therefore, be strong in soul though weak in body.

If the Mussalmans believe in the policy of non-violence, they must give it a fair trial, and they will not have given it any trial at all if they harbour anger *i.e.*, violence in their breasts.

As it is, by our bluster, by intimidation, by show of force, by violent picketing, we shall estrange more men than intimidate into co-operation with us. And how can we dare seek co-operation by compulsion when we have refused to be coerced into co-operation with the Government? Must we not observe the same law that we expect others to observe towards us?

If the Treaty of Sevres is not revised to our satisfaction, it is not finished. The virtue lies in India's determination not to be satisfied with anything less than her demands. After all, Mustafa Kamal may not insist upon the settlement of the Jazirat-ul-Arab. We must continue the fight so long as it is not returned intact to the Mussalmans. If the Mussalmans consider that they can gain their end by force of arms, let them secede from the non-violent alliance by all means. But if they know that they cannot, let them carry it out in thought, word

and deed, and they will find that there is no surer or quicker remedy for assuaging their grief and redressing the *Khila-fat* wrong.

KHILAFAT AND THE COW QUESTION

"The test of friendship is assistance in adversity, and that, too, unconditional assistance. Co-operation that needs consideration is a commercial contract and not friendship."

Addressing the All-India Khilafat Conference at Delhi, Gandhiji said:

Mr. Asaf Ali, the Secretary of the Conference, has intimated in the papers circulated by him that the *Goraksha* problem and the Punjab matter will also be considered. I submit that the Hindus may not open the *Goraksha* question here. The test of friendship is assistance in adversity, and that, too, unconditional assistance. Co-operation that needs consideration is a commercial contract and not friendship. Conditional co-operation is like adulterated cement which does not bind. It is the duty of the Hindus, if they see the justice of the Mahomedan cause, to render co-operation. If the Mahomedans feel themselves bound in honour to spare the Hindus' feelings and to stop cow-killing, they may do so, no matter whether the Hindus co-operate with them or no. Though, therefore, I yield to no Hindu in my worship of the cow, I do not want to make the stopping of cow-killing a condition precedent to co-operation. Unconditional co-operation means the protection of the cow.

As regards the Punjab matter, too, I venture to differ from many of you. I have probed deeply into the Punjab wounds. They may have deeply distressed others. I will not, however, say that they can distress anyone more deeply than they do me, and yet I think that we cannot bring in here the Punjab grievance. However grievous the wrong done in the Punjab, I think we cannot abstain from the Imperial Celebrations on that score. We cannot say that the Punjab wrong is understood to justify our abstention. For, we still expect redress. The Hunter

Committee is still at work. Our own Committee is equally busy. Only if we are dissatisfied or suspicious about a matter directly arising out of the peace terms, can we decide upon abstention.

Such a one is only the *Khilafat* question. It arises out of the *Khilafat* question and not only are we in the dark about it, but we fully apprehend that it may not be settled to our satisfaction. We shall be accused of having been thoughtless and without sense of proportion if we bring in the Punjab to justify abstention, and it will damage both the *Khilafat* and the Punjab question. The *Khilafat* question is a very serious one, and needs immediate remedies. We must isolate it if we wish to give to it its proper place and value.

Maulana Abdul Bari Sahib in proposing a vote of thanks to the Chair said :

Mahatma Gandhi may say anything as regards the bringing in of the *Goraksh* question. That does credit to him and to our Hindu brethren. But the Mussalman's *Khandani* would be at stake if they forgot the co-operation of Hindus. I, for my part, will say that we should stop cow-killing, irrespective of their co-operation, because we are children of the same soil. As a *Maulvi* I say that, in voluntarily stopping cow-killing, we shall not offend against the canons of our religion. Nothing has so helped the Hindu-Muslim unity as the Hindus' co-operation with us in the question of *Khilafat*.

The whole meeting greeted the words with 'Amen.'

SAVE THE COW

"It must be an article of faith for every Hindu that the cow can only be saved by Mussalman friendship. Let us recognize frankly that complete protection of the cow depends purely upon Mussalman good-will."

The Mussalmans are striving their utmost to respect Hindu susceptibilities in this matter of life and death to the Hindus. The Muslim League, under Hakimji Ajmal Khan's presidentship, carried a cow-protection resolution at Amritsar, two years ago. Maulana Abdul Bari has written upon it. The Ali Brothers, for the sake of their Hindu countrymen, have given up the use of beef in their house. Mian Chhotani saved hundreds of cows in Bombay alone during the last Bakr-Id. We could not accuse our Mussalman countrymen of apathy in the matter.

Let us recognize that there is an interest actively working to keep us—Hindus and Mussalmans—divided. That very interest is quite capable of developing regard for Hindu susceptibilities in this respect. I should beware of it, and distrust it. I strongly advise the Shikarpur friends to wait for their Mussalman brethren.

Let them by all means abstain from all meat, so that their Mussalman brethren may have other meat cheaper than beef. Let them consider it a shame to have a single cow or her progeny in distress, or undergoing ill-treatment at the hands of Hindus themselves. Let them develop their *Goshala* so as to make it a model dairy farm, as well as a home for aged and infirm cattle. Let them breed the finest cattle in their *Goshala*. They will do real service to *Gomata*. Let the Shikarpuris, one and all, become true non-co-operators, and hasten the redress of the *Khilafat* wrong. I promise, they will save the cow when they have done their utmost to save the *Khilafat*.

It must be an article of faith for every Hindu, that the cow can only be saved by Mussalman friendship. Let

us recognize frankly, that complete protection of the cow depends purely upon Mussalman good-will. It is as impossible to bend the Mussalmans to our will, as it would be for them to bend us to theirs. We are evolving the doctrine of equal and free partnership. We are fighting Dyerism—the doctrine of frightfulness.

Cow-protection is the dearest possession of the Hindu heart. It is the one concrete belief common to all Hindus. No one who does not believe in cow-protection, can possibly be a Hindu. It is a noble belief. Cow-protection means brotherhood between man and beast. It is a noble sentiment that must grow by patient toil and *tapasya*. It cannot be imposed upon anyone. To carry cow-protection at the point of the sword, is a contradiction in terms. *Rishis* of old are said to have performed penance for the sake of the cow. Let us follow in the foot-steps of the *Rishis* and ourselves do penance, so that we may be pure enough to protect the cow and all that the doctrine means and implies.

COW-PROTECTION

“Any show of force on our part must lead to retaliation and acerbation of feeling. We may not make Mussalmans or anybody respect our feelings, religious or otherwise, by force. We can really do so by exciting their fellow-feeling.”

Cow-protection is an article of faith in Hinduism. Apart from its religious sanctity, it is an ennobling creed. But we, Hindus, have to-day little regard for the cow and her progeny. In no country in the world are cattle so ill-fed and ill-kept as in India. In beef-eating England, it would be difficult to find cattle with bones sticking out of their flesh. Most of our *panjarapoles* are ill-managed and ill-kept. Instead of being a real blessing to the animal world, they are perhaps simply receiving depots for dying animals. We say nothing to the English in India for whose sake hundreds of cows are slaughtered daily. Our Rajas do not hesitate to provide beef for their English guests. Our protection of the cow, therefore, extends to rescuing her from Mussalman hands. This reverse method of cow-protection has led to endless feuds and bad blood between Hindus and Mussalmans. It has probably caused greater slaughter of cows than otherwise would have been the case if we had begun the propaganda in the right order. We should have commenced, as we ought now to commence, with ourselves and cover the land with useful propaganda leading to kindness in the treatment of cattle and scientific knowledge in the management of cattle farms, dairies and *panjarapoles*. We should devote our attention to propaganda among Englishmen in the shape of inducing them voluntarily to abandon beef, or, if they will not do so, at least be satisfied with imported beef. We should secure prohibition of export of cattle from India and we should adopt means of increasing and purifying our milk supply. I have not a shadow of doubt that if we proceed along these

sane lines, we would secure voluntary Mussalman support, and when we have ceased to compel them to stop killing cows on their festival days, we would find that they have no occasion for insisting on killing them. Any show of force on our part must lead to retaliation and acerba-tion of feeling. We may not make Mussalmans or any-body respect our feelings, religious or otherwise, by force. We can really do so only by exciting their fellow-feeling.

My advice to my Hindu brethren is : Simply help the Mussalmans in their sorrow in a generous and self-sacrificing spirit without counting the cost, and you will automatically save the cow. Islam is a noble faith. Trust it and its followers. We must hold it a crime for any Hindu to talk to them about cow-protection or any other help in our religious matters, whilst the *Khilafat* struggle is going on.

LET HINDUS BEWARE

"To attempt cow-protection by violence is to reduce Hinduism to Satanism and to prostitute to a base end the grand significance of cow-protection."

Bihar is the land of promise for Non-co-operation. For, the Hindu-Muslim unity of Bihar is proverbial. I was, therefore, distressed to find that the unity was suffering a strain which might almost prove unbearable. I was told by all responsible leaders—both Hindu and Mahomedan—who are not given to be panicky, that it was taxing their resources to the utmost to avoid a Hindu-Mussalman disturbance. They informed me that certain Hindus, by name Gangaram Sharma, Bhutanath and Vidyanand, for instance, had told the people that I had prohibited the use of meat to any Hindu or Mussalman, and that meat and fish were even forcibly taken away from people by overzealous vegetarians. I know that unlawful use is being made of my name in many places, but this is the most novel method of misusing it. It is generally known that I am a staunch vegetarian and food reformer. But it is not equally generally known that *ahimsa* extends as much to human being as to lower animals and that I freely associate with meat-eaters.

I would not kill a human being for protecting a cow, as I will not kill a cow for saving a human life, be it ever so precious. Needless to say, I have authorized no one to preach vegetarianism as part of Non-co-operation. I do not know the persons named above. I am sure that our purpose will be defeated if propaganda of any kind is accompanied by violence. Hindus may not compel Mussalmans to abstain from meat or even beef-eating. Vegetarian Hindus may not compel other Hindus to abstain from fish, flesh or fowl. I would not make India sober at the point of the sword. Nothing has lowered

the morale of the nation so much as violence. Fear has become the part of the national character. Non-co-operators will make a serious mistake, if they seek to convert people to their creed by violence. They will play into the hands of the Government, if they use the slightest coercion towards anybody in the course of their propaganda.

The cow question is a big question, the greatest for a Hindu. I yield to no one in my regard for the cow. Hindus do not fulfil their trust so long as they do not possess the ability to protect the cow. That ability can be derived either from body-force or soul-force. To attempt cow-protection by violence is to reduce Hinduism to Satanism and to prostitute to a base end the grand significance of cow-protection. As a Mussalman friend writes, beef-eating which is merely permissible in Islam will become a duty, if compulsion is resorted to by Hindus. The latter can protect the cow only by developing the faculty for dying, for suffering. The only chance Hindus have of saving the cow in India from the butcher's knife, is by trying to save Islam from the impending peril and trusting their Mussalman countrymen to return nobility, *i.e.*, voluntarily to protect the cow out of regard for their Hindu countrymen. The Hindus must scrupulously refrain from using any violence against Mussalmans. Suffering and trust are attributes of soul-force. I have heard that at big fairs if a Mussalman is found in possession of cows or even goats, he is at times forcibly dispossessed. Those who, claiming to be Hindus, thus resort to violence, are enemies of the cow and of Hinduism. The best and the only way to save the cow is to save the *Khilafat*. I hope, therefore, that every Non-co-operator will strain himself to the utmost to prevent the slightest tendency to violence in any shape or form, whether to protect the cow or any other animal or to effect any other purpose.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"The greater the pressure put upon the Mussalmans, the greater must be the slaughter of the cow. We must leave them to their own sense of honour and duty. And we shall have done the greatest service to the cow."

Everybody knows that, without unity between Hindus and Mussalmans, no certain progress can be made by the nation. There is no doubt that the cement binding the two is yet loose and wet. There is still mutual distrust. The leaders have come to recognize that India can make no advance without both feeling the need of trust and common action. But though there is a vast change among the masses, it is still not a permanent quantity. The Mussalman masses do not still recognize the same necessity for *Swaraj* as the Hindus do. The Mussalmans do not flock to public meetings in the same numbers as the Hindus. This process cannot be forced. Sufficient time has not passed for the national interest to be awakened among the Mussalmans. Indeed, it is a marvel that, whereas but a year ago the Mussalmans as a body hardly took any interest in Congress affairs, all over India thousands have registered themselves as members. This in itself is an immense gain.

But much more yet remains to be done. It is essentially the work of the Hindus. Wherever the Mussalmans are still found to be apathetic, they should be invited to come in. One often hears from Hindu quarters the complaint that Mussalmans do not join the Congress organizations or do not pay to the Swaraj Fund. The natural question is, have they been invited? In every district, Hindus must make special effort to draw out their Mussalman neighbours. There will never be real equality so long as one feels inferior or superior to the other. There is no room for patronage among equals.

Mussalmans must not feel the lack of education or numbers where they are in a minority. Deficiency in education must be corrected by taking education. To be in a minority is often a blessing. Superiority in numbers has frequently proved a hindrance. It is character that counts in the end. But I have not commenced this article to lay down counsels of perfection, or to state the course of conduct in the distant future.

Let us recognize that our Mussalman brethren have made great efforts to save the cow for the sake of their Hindu brethren. It would be a grave mistake to under-rate them. But immediately we become assertive, we make all efforts on their part nugatory. We have throughout all these many years put up with cow-slaughter either without a murmur or under ineffective and violent protest. We have never tried to deserve self-imposed restraint on the part of our Mussalman countrymen by going out of our way to cultivate friendly relations with them. We have more or less gratuitously assumed the impossibility of the task.

But we are now making a deliberate and conscious attempt in standing by their side in the hour of their need. Let us not spoil the good effect by making our free offering a matter of bargain. Friendship can never be a contract. It is a status carrying no consideration with it. Service is a duty, and duty is a debt which it is a sin not to discharge. If we would prove our friendship, we must help our brethren whether they save the cow or not. We throw the responsibility for their conduct towards us on their own shoulders. We dare not dictate it to them as consideration for our help. Such help will be hired service, which the Mussalmans cannot be blamed if they summarily reject. I hope, therefore, that the Hindus of Bihar and, indeed, all the parts of India will realize the importance of observing the strictest forbearance, no matter what the Mussalmans do on Bakr-Id. We must leave them to take what course they choose. What Hakim Ajmal Khanji did in one hour at Amritsar, Hindus could not have done by years of effort. The cows that Messrs Chotani and Khatri saved last Bakr-Id day, the

Hindu millionaires of Bombay could not have saved if they had given the whole of their fortunes. The greater the pressure put upon the Mussalmans, the greater must be the slaughter of the cow. We must leave them to their own sense of honour and duty. And we shall have done the greatest service to the cow.

The way to save the cow is not to kill or quarrel with the Mussalman. The way to save the cow is to die in the act of saving the *Khilafat* without mentioning the cow. Cow-protection is a process of purification. It is *tapasya*, *i.e.*, self-suffering. When we suffer voluntarily and, therefore, without expectation of reward, the cry of suffering (one might say) literally ascends to heaven and God above hears it and responds. That is the path of religion, and it has answered even if one man has adopted it in its entirety. I make bold to assert, without fear of contradiction, that it is not Hinduism to kill a fellow man even to save the cow. Hinduism requires its votaries to immolate themselves for the sake of their religion, *i.e.*, for the sake of saving the cow. The question is, how many Hindus are ready without bargaining with Mussalmans to die for them and for their religion? If the Hindus can answer it in the religious spirit, they will not only have secured Mussalman friendship for eternity, but they will have saved the cow for all time from the Mussalmans. Let us not swear even by the greatest among them. They can but help. They cannot undertake to change the hearts of millions of men who have hitherto given no thought to the feeling of their Hindu neighbours when they slaughter the cow. But God Almighty can in a moment change them and move them to pity. Prayer accompanied by adequate suffering is prayer of the heart. That alone counts with God.

To my Mussalman friends I would say but one word. They must not be irritated by the acts of the irresponsible or ignorant but fanatical Hindus. He who exercises restraint under provocation wins the battle. Let them know and feel sure that responsible Hindus are not on their side in their trial in any bargaining spirit. They are helping because they know that the *Khilafat* is a just

cause, and that to help them in a good cause is to serve India, for they are even as blood-brothers, born of the same mother—Bharat Mata.

THE COW—A POEM OF PITY

“The cow is a poem of pity. One reads pity in the gentle animal. She is the mother to millions of Indian mankind. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God.”

The following extract is taken from Gandhiji's famous article on Hinduism :

The central fact of Hinduism, however, is cow-protection. Cow-protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution. It takes the human being beyond his species. The cow to me means the entire sub-human world. Man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives. Why the cow was selected for apotheosis is obvious to me. The cow was in India the best companion. She was the giver of plenty. Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible. The cow is a poem of pity. One reads pity in the gentle animal. She is the mother to millions of Indian mankind. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God. The ancient seer, whoever he was, began with the cow. The appeal of the lower order of creation is all the more forcible because it is speechless. Cow-protection is the gift of Hinduism to the world. And Hinduism will live so long as there are Hindus to protect the cow.

The way to protect is to die for her. It is a denial of Hinduism and *ahimsa* to kill a human being to protect a cow. Hindus are enjoined to protect the cow by their *tapasya*, by self-purification, by self-sacrifice. The present day cow-protection has degenerated into a perpetual feud with the Mussalmans, whereas cow-protection means conquering the Mussalmans by our love. A Mussalman friend sent me some time ago a book detailing the in-

humanities practised by us on the cow and her progeny; how we bleed her to take the last drop of milk from her, how we starve her to emaciation, how we ill-treat the calves, how we deprive them of their portion of milk, how cruelly we treat the oxen, how we castrate them, how we beat them, how we overload them. If they had speech, they would bear witness to our crimes against them which would stagger the world. By every act of cruelty to our cattle, we disown God and Hinduism. I do not know that the condition of the cattle in any other part of the world is so bad as in unhappy India. We may not blame the Englishman for this. We may not plead poverty in our defence. Criminal negligence is the only cause of the miserable condition of our cattle. Our *Panjrapoles*, though they are an answer to our instinct of mercy, are a clumsy demonstration of its execution. Instead of being model dairy farms and great profitable national institutions, they are merely depots for receiving decrepit cattle.

Hindus will be judged not by their *tilaks*, not by the correct chanting of *mantras*, not by their pilgrimages, not by their most punctilious observance of caste rules, but by their ability to protect the cow. Whilst professing the religion of cow-protection, we have enslaved the cow and her progeny, and have become slaves ourselves.

It will now be understood why I consider myself a Sanatani Hindu. I yield to none in my regard for the cow. I have made the *Khilafat* cause my own, because I see that through its preservation full protection can be secured for the cow. I do not ask my Mussalman friends to save the cow in consideration of my service. My prayer ascends daily to God Almighty, that my service of a cause I hold to be just may appear so pleasing to Him, that He may change the hearts of the Mussalmans, and fill them with pity for their Hindu neighbours and make them save the animal the latter hold dear as life itself.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"The union that we want is not a patched up thing, but a union of hearts based upon a definite recognition of the indubitable proposition that *Swaraj* for India must be an impossible dream without an indissoluble union between the Hindus and the Muslims of India."

There can be no doubt that successful Non-co-operation depends as much on Hindu-Muslim unity as on non-violence. Greatest strain will be put upon both in the course of the struggle, and if it survives that strain, victory is a certainty.

A severe strain was put upon it in Agra¹, and it has been stated that, when either party went to the authorities, they were referred to Maulana Shaukat Ali and me. Fortunately, there was a far better man at hand. Hakimji Ajmal Khan is a devout Muslim who commands the confidence and the respect of both the parties. He with his band of workers hastened to Agra, settled the dispute and the parties became friends as they were never before. An incident occurred nearer Delhi, and the same influence worked successfully to avoid what might have become an explosion.

But Hakimji Ajmal Khan cannot be everywhere appearing at the exact hour as an angel of peace. Nor can Maulana Shaukat Ali or I go everywhere. And yet perfect peace must be observed between the two communities in spite of attempts to divide them.

Why was there any appeal made to the authorities at all at Agra? If we are to work out Non-co-operation with any degree of success, we must be able to dispense with the protection of the Government when we quarrel among ourselves. The whole scheme of Non-co-opera-

¹ About this time Hindu-Muslim relations were strained at Agra over the cow question.

tion must break to pieces, if our final reliance is to be upon British intervention for the adjustment of our quarrels or the punishment of the guilty ones. In every village and hamlet, there must be at least one Hindu and one Muslim whose primary business must be to prevent quarrels between the two. Sometimes, however, even blood-brothers come to blows. In the initial stages, we are bound to do so here and there. Unfortunately, we who are public workers have made little attempt to understand and influence the masses, and least of all the most turbulent among them. During the process of insinuating ourselves in the estimation of the masses, and until we have gained control over the unruly, there are bound to be exhibitions of hasty temper now and then. We must learn at such times to do without an appeal to the Government. Hakimji Ajmal Khan has shown us how to do it.

The union that we want is not a patched up thing but a union of hearts based upon a definite recognition of the indubitable proposition that *Swaraj* for India must be an impossible dream without an indissoluble union between the Hindus and the Muslims of India. It must not be a mere truce. It cannot be based upon mutual fear. It must be a partnership between equals, each respecting the religion of the other.

I would frankly despair of reaching such union, if there was anything in the Holy Quran enjoining upon the followers of Islam to treat Hindus as their natural enemies, or if there was anything in Hinduism to warrant a belief in the eternal enmity between the two.

We would ill learn our history if we conclude that because we have quarrelled in the past, we are destined so to continue unless some such strong power like the British keep us by force of arms from flying at each other's throats. But I am convinced that there is no warrant in Islam or Hinduism for any such belief. True it is that interested or fanatical priests in both religions have set the one against the other. It is equally true that Muslim rulers like Christian rulers have used the sword for the propagation of their respective faiths. But in spite of

many dark things of the modern times, the world's opinion to-day will as little tolerate forcible conversions as it will tolerate forcible slavery. That probably is the most effective contribution of the scientific spirit of the age. That spirit has revolutionized many a false notion about Christianity, as it has about Islam. I do not know a single writer on Islam who defends the use of force in the proselytizing process. The influences exerted in our times are far more subtle than that of the sword.

I believe that, in the midst of all the bloodshed, chicane and fraud being resorted to on a colossal scale in the West, the whole of humanity is silently but surely making progress towards a better age. And India, by finding true independence and self-expression through an imperishable Hindu-Muslim unity and through non-violent means *i.e.*, unadulterated self-sacrifice, can point a way out of the prevailing darkness.

A SUPERSTITION

“There is nothing to prove that Hindus and Mussalmans lived at war with one another before the British rule. My belief is that the British policy of ‘divide and rule’ has accentuated our differences, and will continue to do so till we recognize that we must unite in spite of the policy.”

A Bengal Zamindar sends me a long letter dealing with Hindu-Muslim unity, Untouchability and *Swaraj*. The letter is too long for publication and covers no new ground. I cull, however, one typical sentence from it. It is:

“For over five hundred years the relation between Hindus and Mussalmans was that of foes. After the advent of British rule, both the Mussalmans and Hindus were compelled out of policy to forget that racial hatred, and the acrimony of that bitter enmity is now no more. But the permanent difference in the constitution of these two races does even now exist. I believe the present cordial relation is due to British rule, and not to the catholicity of modern Hinduism.”

I regard this statement as pure superstition. The two races lived at peace among themselves during the Mussalman rule. Let it be remembered that many Hindus embraced Islam before the advent of Muslim rule in India. It is my belief that had there been no Muslim rule, there would still have been Mussalmans in India, even as there would have been Christians had there been no British rule. There is nothing to prove that Hindus and Mussalmans lived at war with one another before the British rule. My belief is that the British policy of ‘divide and rule’ has accentuated our differences and will continue to do so, till we recognize that we must unite in spite of the policy. This cannot and will not happen unless we refrain from a scramble for place and power. The beginning must be made by the Hindus.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

“What is a non-essential to a Hindu may be an essential to a Mussalman. And in all non-essential matters, a Hindu must yield for the asking. It is criminal folly to quarrel over trivialities. The unity we desire will last only if we cultivate a yielding and a charitable disposition towards one another.”

That unity is strength is not merely a copy-book maxim but a rule of life, is in no case so clearly illustrated as in the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. Divided we must fall. Any third power may easily enslave India so long as we Hindus and Mussalmans are ready to cut each other's throats. Hindu-Muslim unity means not unity only between Hindus and Mussalmans, but between all those who believe India to be their home, no matter to what faith they belong.

I am fully aware that we have not yet attained that unity to such an extent as to bear any strain. It is a daily growing plant, as yet in delicate infancy, requiring special care and attention. The thing became clear in Nellore when the problem confronted me in a concrete shape. The relations between the two were none too happy. They fought only about two years ago over what appeared to me to be a small matter. It was the eternal question of playing music whilst passing mosques. I hold that we may not dignify every trifle into a matter of deep religious importance. Therefore, a Hindu may not insist on playing music whilst passing a mosque. He may not even quote precedents in his own or any other place for the sake of playing music. It is not a matter of vital importance for him to play music whilst passing a mosque. One can easily appreciate the Mussalman sentiment of having solemn silence near a mosque the whole of the twenty-four hours. What is a non-essential to a Hindu may be an essential to a Mussalman. And in all non-

essential matters, a Hindu must yield for the asking. It is criminal folly to quarrel over trivialities. The unity we desire will last only if we cultivate a yielding and a charitable disposition towards one another. The cow is as dear as life to a Hindu; the Mussalman should, therefore, voluntarily accommodate his Hindu brother. Silence at his prayer is a precious thing for a Mussalman. Every Hindu should voluntarily respect his Mussalman brother's sentiment. This, however, is a counsel of perfection. There are nasty Hindus as there are nasty Mussalmans who would pick a quarrel for nothing. For these we must provide *Panchayats* of unimpeachable probity and imperturbability whose decisions must be binding on both parties. Public opinion should be cultivated in favour of the decisions of such *Panchayats* so that no one would question them.

I know that there is much, too much, distrust of one another as yet. Many Hindus distrust Mussalmans' honesty. They believe that *Swaraj* means Mussalman *Raj*, for they argue that without the British, Mussalmans of India will aid Mussalman powers to build up a Mussalman empire in India. Mussalmans, on the other hand, fear that the Hindus being in an overwhelming majority will smother them. Such an attitude of mind betokens impotence on either's part. If not their nobility, their desire to live in peace would dictate a policy of mutual trust and mutual forbearance. There is nothing in either religion to keep the two apart. The days of forcible conversion are gone. Save for the cow, Hindus can have no ground for quarrel with Mussalmans. The latter are under no religious obligation to slaughter a cow. The fact is, we have never before now endeavoured to come together, to adjust our differences and to live as friends bound to one another as children of the same sacred soil. We have both now an opportunity of a life-time. The *Khilafat* question will not recur for another hundred years. If the Hindus wish to cultivate eternal friendship with the Mussalmans, they must perish with them in the attempt to vindicate the honour of Islam.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY—A CAMOUFLAGE ?

“If it is the interposition of the British Government which keeps us from fighting one another, the sooner we are left free to fight, the better for our manhood, our respective religions and our country. It will not be a new phenomenon if we fought ourselves into sanity.”

The editorial notes in the current number of *The Modern Review* contain reflections on Hindu-Muslim unity which deserve a reply. The talented editor has headed them with the word ‘Camouflage,’ and has evidently come to the conclusion that the unity is only so-called. In my opinion, however, it is not only not a camouflage, but is fast becoming a permanent reality. I have made the admission in these pages, that it is a sapling requiring delicate handling. But it is certainly not a pretension or make-believe, if only because both realize the truth of the common danger.

It is unfortunately still true that the communal or the sectarian spirit is predominant. Mutual distrust is still there. Old memories are still alive. It is still true that at elections considerations not of fitness but of religion prevail. But to recognize these facts is to recognize the difficulty of union. When both parties know them and are honestly trying to achieve unity in spite of them, it is hardly just to call the attempt or the limited achievement a camouflage.

It is not correct to say that the appeal of the *Khilafat* associations against cow-killing leaves the Mussalmans cold and unresponsive. In the first place, is it not a cheering phenomenon that *Khilafat* workers, themselves Mussalmans, are working to prevent cow-killing? In the second place, I venture to assure the editor that the appeal has had wonderful success in almost all the parts of India. Is it a small matter that the burden of cow-protection has been taken over almost entirely by the

Mussalman workers? Was it not a soul-stirring thing for Hindus to witness Messrs. Chhotani and Khatri of Bombay rescuing hundreds of cows from their co-religionists, and presenting them to the grateful Hindus?

It is certainly true that both Maulana Mahomed Ali and I are careful enough 'not to tread on each other's corns.' But, for frankness of treatment it would be difficult to beat us. For us the unity is not 'a house of cards', as the writer cruelly suggests, but it is such a substantial fact that we would die to keep it intact. Let me inform the reader that throughout all our journeyings, there has never been a jar between us, never any mental reservations. The cruelest cut, however, is given in the following sentence: 'Reading between the lines of their speeches, it is not difficult to see that with one of them the sad plight of the *Khilafat* in distant Turkey is the central fact, while with the other the attainment of *Swaraj* here in India is the primary object in view.' I claim that with us both the *Khilafat* is the central fact, with Maulana Mahomed Ali because it is his religion, with me because in laying down my life for the *Khilafat*, I ensure the safety of the cow, that is my religion, from the Mussalman knife. Both hold *Swaraj* equally dear, because only by *Swaraj* is the safety of our respective faiths possible. This may seem a lower ideal. But there is no concealment in it. For me, the attainment of the *Khilafat* through India's power is the attainment of *Swaraj*. Love is the basis of our friendship as it is of religion. I seek to gain Mussalman friendship by right of love. And if love persists even on the part of one community, unity will become a settled fact in our national life. It is unjust to suggest of Maulana Mahomed Ali that he speaks in elegant Urdu, ununderstandable to the majority of Bengali Mussalmans. I know that he has been trying his best to introduce into his Urdu speech as much simplicity as possible.

It is unfortunately true that there are still Hindus and Mussalmans who out of fear of one another consider foreign domination a necessity. And that has not a little to do with the delay in the attainment of our goal. We do not yet clearly perceive that the possibility of a free

fight between the two communities is a lesser evil than the existence of foreign domination. And if it is the interposition of the British Government which keeps us from fighting one another, the sooner we are left free to fight, the better for our manhood, our respective religions and our country. It will not be a new phenomenon if we fought ourselves into sanity.

The English carried on internecine warfare for twenty-one years before they settled down to peaceful work. The French fought among themselves with a savage ferocity hardly excelled during recent times. The Americans did nothing better before they evolved their Commonwealth. Let us not hug our unmanliness for fear of fighting amongst ourselves. The able writer of the notes loves unity as much as any of us and suggests that there must be 'a root and branch change, a radical transformation and reconstruction from the foundation.' But he leaves the reader to guess the remedy. It would have been better if he had made concrete suggestions. He would evidently have us inter-marry and inter-dine, if only by way of a beginning. If that is the radical transformation desired by him, and if it is a condition precedent to the attainment of *Swaraj*, I very much fear that we would have to wait at least for a century. It is tantamount to asking Hindus to give up their religion. I do not say that it is wrong to do so, but I do suggest that it is reformation outside practical politics. And when that transformation comes, if it is ever to come, it will not be Hindu-Muslim unity. And what the present movement is aiming at is to achieve unity even whilst a devout Mussalman retains his faith intact, and devout Hindu his. I have, therefore, often said to my audiences that the Ali Brothers and I serve as an object lesson to all Hindus and Mussalmans in Hindu-Muslim unity. We both claim to be devoted to our respective faiths. In spite of the greatest regard for the Brothers, I would not give my daughter in marriage to one of their sons, and I know that they would not give theirs to my son, assuming that, in spite of his being a Hindu, he so far reformed himself as to covet the hand of their daughter. I do not partake of their

meat foods, and they scrupulously respect my bigotry, if my self-denial may be so named. And yet I do not know three persons whose hearts are more united than those of the Ali Brothers and myself. And I wish to assure the reader that the unity is not a camouflage, but it is a lasting friendship based upon exquisitely delicate regard and toleration of one another's views and habits.

And I have no manner of fear that, when the protecting hand of the British is withdrawn from me, either the Brothers or their friends would violate my freedom or attack my religion. And I base this security from fear first upon God and His promise of safety to every creature of His who endeavours to walk in His fear, and then upon the honourable conduct of the Brothers and their friends, although I am aware that physically any one of them is more than a match for twelve like me taken together. And so from the particular instance, I have generalized for the whole of India, and shown that Hindu-Muslim unity is possible, if only we have mutual toleration and faith in ourselves and, therefore, in the ultimate goodness of human nature.

HINDU-MAHOMEDAN UNITY

“Intermarriage and interdining are not necessary factors in friendship and unity, though they are often emblems thereof. But insistence on either the one or the other can easily become and is to-day a bar to Hindu-Mahomedan unity.”

Mr. Candler¹ some time ago asked me in an imaginary interview whether, if I was sincere in my professions of Hindu-Mahomedan unity, I would eat and drink with a Mahomedan and give my daughter in marriage to a Mahomedan. This question has been asked again by some friends in another form. Is it necessary for Hindu-Mahomedan unity that there should be inter-dining and inter-marrying? The questioners say that if the two are necessary, real unity can never take place because crores of *Sanatanis* would never reconcile themselves to inter-dining, much less to inter-marriage.

I am one of those who do not consider caste to be a harmful institution. In its origin, caste was a wholesome custom and promoted national well-being. In my opinion, the idea that inter-dining or inter-marrying is necessary for national growth, is a superstition borrowed from the West. Eating is a process just as vital as the other sanitary necessities of life. And if mankind had not, much to its harm, made of eating a fetish and indulgence, we would have performed the operation of eating in private, even as one performs the other necessary functions of life in private. Indeed, the highest culture in Hinduism regards eating in that light and there are thousands of Hindus still living who will not eat their food in the presence of anybody. I can recall the names

¹ Mr. Edmund Candler, a well-known English journalist and war correspondent, was, at the time, Publicity Officer in the Punjab and wrote some open letters to Mahatma Gandhi questioning his attitude towards the *Khilafat* problem.

of several cultured men and women who ate their food in entire privacy, but who never had any ill-will against anybody and who lived on the friendliest terms with all.

Inter-marriage is a still more difficult question. If brothers and sisters can live on the friendliest footing without ever thinking of marrying each other, I can see no difficulty in my daughter regarding every Mahomedan a brother and *vice versa*. I hold strong views on religion and on marriage. The greater the restraint we exercise with regard to our appetites, whether about eating or marrying, the better we become from a religious standpoint. I should despair of ever cultivating amicable relations with the world, if I had to recognize the right or the propriety of any young man offering his hand in marriage to my daughter, or to regard it as necessary for me to dine with anybody and everybody. I claim that I am living on terms of friendliness with the whole world. I have never quarrelled with a single Mahomedan or a Christian, but for years I have taken nothing but fruits in Mahomedan or Christian households. I would most certainly decline to eat cooked food from the same plate with my son, or to drink water out of a cup which his lips have touched and which has not been washed. But the restraint or the exclusiveness exercised in these matters by me has never affected the closest companionship with the Mahomedan or the Christian friends or my sons.

But inter-dining and inter-marriage have never been a bar to disunion, quarrels and worse. The Pandavas and the Kauravas flew at one another's throats without compunction although they inter-dined and inter-married. The bitterness between the English and the Germans has not yet died out.

The fact is that inter-marriage and inter-dining are not necessary factors in friendship and unity, though they are often emblems thereof. But insistence on either the one or the other can easily become and is to-day a bar to Hindu-Mahomedan unity. If we make ourselves believe that Hindus and Mahomedans cannot be one unless they inter-dine or inter-marry, we would be creating an artificial barrier between us which it might be almost

impossible to remove. And it would seriously interfere with the growing unity between Hindus and Mahomedans if, for example, Mahomedan youths consider it lawful to court Hindu girls. The Hindu parents will not, even if they suspected any such thing, freely admit Mahomedans to their homes as they have begun to do now. In my opinion, it is necessary for Hindu and Mahomedan young men to recognize this limitation. *

I hold it to be utterly impossible for Hindus and Mahomedans to inter-marry and yet retain intact each other's religion. And the true beauty of Hindu-Mahomedan unity lies in each remaining true to his own religion and yet being true to each other. For, we are thinking of Hindus and Mahomedans even of the most orthodox type being able to regard one another as natural enemies as they have done hitherto.

What, then, does the Hindu-Mahomedan unity consist in and how can it be best promoted? The answer is simple. It consists in our having a common purpose, a common goal and common sorrows. It is best promoted by co-operating to reach the common goal, by sharing one another's sorrows and by mutual toleration. A common goal we have. We wish this great country of ours to be greater and self-governing. We have enough sorrows to share. And to-day seeing that the Mahomedans are deeply touched on the question of *Khilafat* and their case is just, nothing can be so powerful for winning Mahomedan friendship for the Hindu as to give his whole-hearted support to the Mahomedan claim. No amount of drinking out of the same cup or dining out of the same bowl can bind the two as this help in the *Khilafat* question.

And mutual toleration is a necessity for all time and for all races. We cannot live in peace if the Hindu will not tolerate the Mahomedan form of worship of God and his manners and customs, or if the Mahomedan will be impatient of Hindu idolatry or cow-worship. It is not necessary for toleration that I must approve of what I tolerate. I heartily dislike drinking, meat-eating and smoking, but I tolerate all these in Hindus, Maho-

medans and Christians, even as I expect them to tolerate my abstinence from all these although they may dislike it. All the quarrels between the Hindus and the Mahomedans have arisen from each wanting to force the other to his view.

INTER-DINING AGAIN

"Insistence upon inter-dining as part of the programme of promotion of fellowship, in my opinion, retards the growth of goodwill by raising false issues and even false hope."

A correspondent writes :

"You have answered at length an Englishman's 'puzzle' on the question of inter-marriage. But what about interdining which is a much less vital affair, but more frequent in life? Suppose, some men of good-will organize as one means of promoting goodwill amongst all classes, an intercaste, inter-communal and international dinner on purely vegetarian and non-alcoholic lines; would you from your own *Sanatan* point of view object, if any Hindu—say, some members of your caste or of your own family—wished to join that dinner on invitation (and, not, of course, on compulsion?) and asked your opinion on it? Similarly, may a Brahman with your view of the *Sanatan* (or *Maryada*) *Dharma* accept a clean dish of rice and a pure cup of water which a *Chandal* or a Mussalman or a Christian has offered him (and not, of course, forced on him), finding the Brahman way-worn, hungry and thirsty (and almost on the point of fainting, let us say) in a lone wild place? In fine, the question is: Does such a demonstration of goodwill as the 'cosmopolitan' dinner, or the offer of a dish by a supposed untouchable to a touchable Hindu and acceptance thereof, square with your idea of the *Sanatan* or *Varnashrama Dharma* or *Maryada Dharma* or does it not?"

If a Brahman is in distress he would take, if he wishes to hold on to his body, clean food by whomsoever offered. I would neither object to nor advocate participation in an international or cosmopolitan dinner, for the simple reason that such functions do not necessarily promote friendship or good-will. It is possible to-day to organize a dinner party between Hindus and Mussalmans, but I dare to say that such a dinner will no more bring the two communities together than the absence of it keeps them apart. I have known deadly enemies dine and chat together heartily and yet remain enemies. Where will the

correspondent draw the line? Why does he stop at vegetarian and non-alcoholic meals? A man who regards flesh-eating a virtue and wine-bibbing a harmless and pleasurable refreshment, will see nothing but promotion of good-will in dividing with the world his beef-steak and exchanging with it the sparkling cup? On the argument underlying the correspondent's query, there can be no dividing line. I, therefore, rule out inter-dining as the means of promoting good-will. Whilst I do not myself observe these restrictions and take food that I do not regard as forbidden at the hands of anyone so long as it is cleanly dressed, I respect the scruples of those who observe the restrictions. Nor do I pat myself on the back for my 'liberal' practice as against the others' 'narrowness.' I may be narrow and selfish in spite of my apparently liberal practice, and my friend may be liberal and unselfish notwithstanding his apparently narrow practice. Merit or demerit lies in the motive. Insistence upon inter-dining, as part of the programme of promotion of fellowship, in my opinion, retards the growth of good-will by raising false issues and even false hope. What I am trying to remove is the idea of pollution and superiority. These self-imposed restrictions have a sanitary as also a spiritual value. But non-observance no more dooms a man to perdition than its observance raises him to the seventh heaven. A man who observes the dining restrictions in a most punctilious manner may be a veritable blackguard fit to be shunned by society, and a cosmopolitan omnivorous man may be one ever walking in the fear of God whose society it would be a privilege to cultivate.

A PERTINENT QUESTION

"We have forgotten the divine art of dying for our faiths without retaliation, and we have equally forgotten the art of using force in self-defence at the peril of our lives. And Hindu-Muslim unity is nothing, if it is not partnership between brave men and women."

I paraphrase below what a friend writes regarding the influence of the Moplah outbreak on Hindu-Muslim unity :

"I am a staunch believer in Hindu-Muslim unity. But this Moplah outbreak has raised doubts in me. Success in the *Khilafat* means strength to Islam. Strength to Islam means attempts at conversion. Have we not often been given the choice between Islam and the sword? Can people such as Moplahs learn the beauty of non-violence? And even if they appreciate non-violence for the sake of their faith, will they not use violence for the sake of spreading their faith? My belief in the necessity of Hindu-Muslim unity is there. But do you not think that the questions I have raised are relevant?"

The questions are indeed relevant, if only because they have occurred to one so sane as the writer is. But, in my opinion, there is a misunderstanding about the whole question. Our advocacy of the *Khilafat* would be wrong if Islam were based on force. There is nothing in the Quran to warrant the use of force for conversion. The Holy Book says in the clearest language possible : "There is no compulsion in religion." The Prophet's whole life is a repudiation of compulsion in religion. No Mussalman, to my knowledge, has ever approved of compulsion. Islam would cease to be a world religion, if it were to rely upon force for its propagation.

Secondly, historically speaking, the charge of conversion to Islam by force cannot be proved against its followers as a body. And, whenever attempts have been made to convert by force, responsible Mussalmans have

repudiated such conversions.

Thirdly, the conception of Hindu-Muslim unity does not pre-suppose a total absence for all time of wrong by any of the parties. On the contrary, it assumes that our loyalty to the unity will survive shocks such as forcible conversions by Moplahs, that in every such case we shall not blame the whole body of the followers, but seek relief against individuals by way of arbitration and not by way of reprisals.

Fourthly, acceptance of non-violence for organizing India's freedom involves acceptance of non-violence for Hindu-Muslim solidarity. The Moplahs have certainly broken the rule. But they were prevented from having access to the new manifestation. Whilst they had heard something about the *Khilafat* vaguely, they knew nothing of non-violence.

Fifthly, we need not suspect any evil befalling India under *Swaraj*; for it is tolerably certain that, had the Congress and the *Khilafat* workers been permitted to penetrate the Moplah territories, they would have been able to nip the evil in the bud. As it was, it is a matter capable of proof that the *Khilafat* workers, wherever they could go, were able to exercise great restraining influence. To me the Moplah madness is proof of the Hindu-Muslim solidarity, because we kept calm. As members of a family, we shall sometimes fight, but we shall always have leaders who will compose our differences and keep us under check.

Sixthly, in the face of possibilities of such madness in future, what is the alternative to Hindu-Muslim unity? A perpetuation of slavery? If we regard one another as natural enemies, is there any escape from eternal foreign domination for either of us? Is not the present domination worse than the possibility of forcible conversions or worse? Is Hinduism worth anything, if it cannot survive force? Cannot the Mussalmans, too, ask the same question as the friend has asked? Is there no possibility of a repetition of pillage and murder on the part of Hindus, as happened in Shahabad three years ago? Is not the remedy, therefore, clearly Hindu-Muslim unity at all

hazards? The Hindus, as also the Mussalmans, whenever one of them goes mad, have two courses left open. Either to die valiantly without retaliation, that will at once arrest the progress of mischief; or to retaliate and live or die. For individuals, both the courses will abide as long as the world lasts. All questionings arise, because we have become helpless. We have forgotten the divine art of dying for our faiths without retaliation, and we have equally forgotten the art of using force in self-defence at the peril of our lives. And Hindu-Muslim unity is nothing, if it is not a partnership between brave men and women. We must trust each other always, but in the last resort we must trust ourselves and our God.

THE MEANING OF THE MOPLAH RISING

"I want both the Hindus and Mussalmans to cultivate the cool courage to die without killing. But if one has not that courage, I want him to cultivate the art of killing and being killed, rather than in cowardly manner flee from danger."

A correspondent from Scotland takes me to task for not dealing sufficiently with the Moplah rising in these columns. The result, he says, has been that those in Great Britain who are in the habit of studying Indian affairs have been induced to believe that an Islamic kingdom is established in India. The reproof is not wholly undeserved, but I have not shirked duty in the matter. I have been simply helpless. I wanted to go to Calicut and reach the bottom of the trouble as I believed I could have. But the Government had willed it otherwise. I am sorry to believe, but it is my belief, that the men on the spot do not wish to give Non-co-operators the credit for peacefully ending the trouble. They are desirous of showing once more that it is only the British soldier who can maintain peace in India. And I could not, then, give battle to the Government by disregarding the instructions not to enter the disturbed area.

I should like to think better of the men on the spot. It is contrary to my nature to believe in the depravity of human beings. But there is so much evidence about me of the depravity of the bureaucratic mind that it will stop at nothing to gain its end. It is the literal truth I tell when I say that before I went to Champaran, I did not believe the stories I was told of atrocities committed against the peasantry of Champaran. When I went there, I found the state much worse than was described to me. I had refused to believe that innocent people could have been murdered in cold blood without warning, as they were in Jalianwalla Bagh. I had refused to believe that

human beings could be made to crawl upon their bellies. But on reaching the Punjab, I found to my horror that much more than what I was told had happened. And all this was done in the name of peace and order so called, but in reality for the purpose of sustaining a false prestige, a false system and an unnatural commerce. It is true that a strong Lieutenant-Governor was able to attain justice in Champaran in the face of overwhelming opposition. But that was really an exception due to exceptional causes. And so I feel the Moplah revolt has come as a blessing to a system that is crumbling to pieces by the weight of its own enormity.

The Moplah revolt is a test for Hindus and Mussalmans. Can Hindu friendship survive the strain put upon it? Can Mussalmans, in the deepest recesses of their hearts, approve of the conduct of the Moplahs? Time alone can show the reality. A verbal and forced philosophic acceptance of the inevitable is no test of Hindu friendship. The Hindus must have the courage and the faith to feel that they can protect their religion in spite of such fanatical eruptions. A verbal disapproval by the Mussalmans of Moplah madness is no test of Mussalman friendship. The Mussalmans must naturally feel the shame and humiliation of the Moplah conduct about forcible conversions and looting, and they must work away so silently and effectively that such things might become impossible even on the part of the most fanatical among them. My belief is that the Hindus as a body have received the Moplah madness with equanimity, and that the cultured Mussalmans are sincerely sorry for the Moplah's perversion of the teachings of the Prophet.

The Moplah revolt teaches another lesson, *viz.*, that each individual must be taught the art of self-defence. It is more a mental state that has to be inculcated than that our bodies should be trained for retaliation. Our mental training has been one of feeling helpless. Bravery is not a quality of the body, it is of the soul. I have seen cowards encased in tough muscle, and rare courage in the frailest body. I have seen Emily Hobhouse with a paralytic body exhibiting courage of the highest order.

She was the one noble woman who kept up the drooping spirits of brave Boer generals, and equally brave Boer women. The weakest of us physically must be taught the art of facing dangers and giving a good account of ourselves. What was more detestable, the ignorant fanaticism of the Moplah brother, or the cowardliness of the Hindu brother who helplessly muttered the Islamic formula or allowed his tuft of hair to be cut or his vest to be changed? Let me not be misunderstood. I want both the Hindus and Mussalmans to cultivate the cool courage to die without killing. But if one has not that courage, I want him to cultivate the art of killing and being killed, rather than in cowardly manner flee from danger. For the latter, in spite of his flight, does commit mental *himsa*. He flees because he has not the courage to be killed in the act of killing.

There is yet another lesson the Moplah outbreak teaches us. We dare not leave any section of our countrymen in utter darkness and expect not to be overtaken by it ourselves. Our English 'Masters' were uninterested in the Moplahs becoming orderly citizens, and learning the virtue of toleration and the truth of Islam. But we, too, have neglected our ignorant countrymen all these long centuries. We have not felt the call of love to see that no one was left ignorant of the necessity of humaneness, or remained in want of food or clothing for no fault of his own. If we do not wake up betimes, we shall find a similar tragedy enacted by all the submerged classes. The present awakening is affecting all classes. The 'untouchables' and all the so-called semi-savage tribes will presently bear witness to our wrongs against them, if we do not do penance and render tardy justice to them.

HINDUS AND MOPLAHS

"Hindu-Muslim unity will be a very cheap and tawdry affair if it has to depend upon mere reciprocation. Is a husband's loyalty dependent upon the wife's, or may a wife be faithless because the husband is a rake? Marriage will be a sordid thing when the partners treat their conduct as a matter of exchange, pure and simple. Unity is like marriage."

Though the letters on the Moplah trouble and the Mussalman attitude by Messrs. Keshav Menon and others have already appeared in the Press, contrary to my wont I publish the two communications¹ for the importance that attaches to them. Possibly the fact of their publication in the pages of *Young India* will be some balm for the wounds that the Moplah madness has inflicted on the Hindu heart. The writers were entitled to give vent to their pent up feelings.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani is one of our most courageous men. He is strong and unbending. He is frank to a fault. In his insensate hatred of the English Government, and possibly even of Englishmen in general, he has seen nothing wrong in anything that the Moplahs have done. Everything is fair in love and war with the Maulana. He has made up his mind that the Moplahs have fought for their religion. And that fact (in his estimation) practically absolves the Moplahs from all blame. That is no doubt a travesty of religion and morality. But to do irreligion for the sake of religion is the religious creed of Maulana Hasrat Mohani. I know it has no warrant in Islam. I have talked to several learned Mussalmans. They do not defend Hasrat Mohani's attitude.

I advise my Malabar friends not to mind the Maulana. In spite of his amazingly crude views about religion,

¹ Omitted.

there is no greater nationalist nor a greater lover of Hindu-Muslim unity than the Maulana. His heart is sound and superior to his intellect, which, in my humble opinion, has suffered aberration.

The Malabar friends are wrong in thinking that the Mussalmans in general have not condemned or have in any way approved of the various crimes committed by the Moplahs. Islam protects even in war women, children and old men from molestation. Islam does not justify *jehad* except under well-defined conditions. So far as I know the law of Islam, the Moplahs could not, on their own initiative, declare *jehad*. Maulana Abdul Bari has certainly condemned the Moplah excesses.

But what though the Mussalmans did not condemn them? Hindu-Muslim friendship is not a bargain. The very word friendship excludes any such idea. If we have acquired the national habit, the Moplah is every whit a countryman as a Hindu. Hindus may not attach greater weight to Moplah fanaticism than to Hindu fanaticism. If instead of the Moplahs, Hindus had violated Hindu homes in Malabar, against whom would the complaint be lodged? Hindus have to find out a remedy against such occurrences, as much as the Mussalmans. When a Hindu or a Mussalman does evil, it is an evil done by an Indian to an Indian, and each one of us must personally share the blame and try to remove the evil. There is no other meaning to unity than this. Nationalism is nothing, if it is not at least this. Nationalism is greater than sectarianism. And in that sense, we are Indians first and Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians after.

Whilst, therefore, we may regret Maulana Hasrat Mohani's attitude on the Moplah question, we must not blame the Mussalmans as a whole, nor must we blame the Maulana as a Mussalman. We should deplore the fact that one Indian does not see the obvious wrong that our other brethren have done. There is no unity, if we must continuously look at things communally.

Critics may say: 'All this is sheer nonsense, because it is so inconsistent with facts. It is visionary.' But my contention is that we shall never achieve solidarity

unless new facts are *made* to suit the principle, instead of performing the impossible feat of changing the principle to suit existing facts. I see nothing impossible in Hindus, as Indians, trying to wean the Moplahs, as Indians, from their error. I see nothing impossible in asking the Hindus to develop courage and strength to die before accepting forced conversion. If these have died without anger or malice, they have died as truest Hindus because they were truest among Indians and men. And thus would these men have died even if their persecutors had been Hindus instead of Mussalmans. Hindu-Muslim unity will be a very cheap and tawdry affair if it has to depend upon mere reciprocation. Is a husband's loyalty dependent upon the wife's, or may a wife be faithless because the husband is a rake? Marriage will be a sordid thing when the partners treat their conduct as a matter of exchange, pure and simple. Unity is like marriage. It is more necessary for a husband to draw closer to his wife when she is about to fall. Then is the time for a double outpouring of love. Even so is it more necessary for a Hindu to love the Moplah and the Mussalman more, when the latter is likely to injure him or has already injured him. Unity to be real must stand the severest strain without breaking. It must be an indissoluble tie.

And I hold that what I have put before the country in the foregoing lines is a simple selfish idea. Does a Hindu love his religion and country more than himself? *If* he does, it follows that he must not quarrel with an ignorant Mussalman who neither knows country nor religion. The process is like that of the world-famed woman who professed to give up her child to her rival instead of dividing it with the latter—a performance that would have suited the latter admirably.

Let us assume (which is not the fact) that the Mussalmans really approve of all that the Moplahs have done. Is the compact, then, to be dissolved? And when it is dissolved, will the Hindus be any better off for the dissolution? Will they revenge themselves upon the Moplahs by getting foreign assistance to destroy them and

their fellow Mussalmans, and be content to be for ever slaves? Non-co-operation is a universal doctrine, because it is as applicable to family relations as to any other. It is a process of evolving strength and self-reliance. Both the Hindus and Mussalmans must learn to stand alone and against the whole world, before they become really united. This unity is not to be between weak parties, but between men who are conscious of their strength. It will be an evil day for Mussalmans if, where they are in a minority, they have to depend for the observance of their religion upon Hindu good-will and *vice versa*. Non-co-operation is a process of self-realization.

But this self-realization is impossible if the strong become brutes and tread upon the weak. Then, they must be trodden under by the stronger. Hence, if Hindus and Mussalmans really wish to live as men of religion, they must develop strength from within. They must be both strong and humble. Hindus must find out the causes of Moplah fanaticism. They will find that they are not without blame. They have hitherto not cared for the Moplah. They have either treated him as a serf or dreaded him. They have not treated him as a friend and neighbour, to be reformed and respected. It is no use now becoming angry with Moplahs or the Mussalmans in general. Whilst Hindus have a right to expect Mussalman aid and sympathy, the problem is essentially one of self-help, *i.e.*, development of strength from within. It would be a sad day for Islam if the defence of the *Khilafat* was to depend upon Hindu help. Hindu help is at the disposal of the Mussalmans, because it is the duty of the Hindus, as neighbours, to give it. And whilst Mussalmans accept help so ungrudgingly given, their final reliance is and must be upon God. He is the never-failing and sole Help of the helpless. And so let it be with the Hindus of Malabar.

AN APPEAL TO BOMBAY CITIZENS

“There is only one God for us all whether we find Him through the Quran, the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Talmud or the Gita. And He is God of Truth and Love. I have no interest in living save for proving this faith in me.”

On the occasion of the Prince of Wales' visit to Bombay, a terrible riot broke out in the city due to the hooliganism of the turbulent elements in the mob. Gandhiji felt greatly shocked and issued the following appeal:

Men and Women of Bombay,

It is not possible to describe to you the agony I have suffered during the past two days. I am writing this now at 3-30 A. M. in perfect peace. After two hours' of prayer and meditation I have found it. I must refuse to eat or drink anything but water till the Hindus and Mussalmans of Bombay have made peace with the Parsis, the Christians and the Jews, and till the non-co-operators have made peace with the co-operators.

The *Swaraj* that I have witnessed during the last two days has stunk in my nostrils. Hindu-Muslim unity has been a menace to the handful of Parsis, Christians and Jews. The non-violence of the non-co-operators has been worse than the violence of co-operators. For, with non-violence on our lips we have terrorized those who have differed from us, and in so doing we have denied our God. There is only one God for us all, whether we find Him through the Quran, the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Talmud or the Gita. And He is God of Truth and Love. I have no interest in living save for proving this faith in me. I cannot hate an Englishman or any one else. I have spoken and written much against his institutions, especially the one he has set up in India. I shall continue to do so if I live. But you must not mistake my condemnation of the system for that

of the man. My religion requires me to love him as I love myself. I would deny God if I did not attempt to prove it at this critical moment.

And the Parsis? I have meant every word I have said about them. Hindus and Mussalmans will be unworthy of freedom if they do not defend them and their honour with their lives. They have only recently proved their liberality and friendship. The Mussalmans are especially beholden to them, for the Parsis have, compared to their number, given more than they themselves to the *Khilafat* funds. Unless Hindus and Mussalmans have expressed full and free repentance, I cannot face again the appealing eyes of Parsi men and women that I saw on the 17th instant as I passed through them. Nor can I face Andrews when he returns from East Africa, if we have done no reparation to the Indian Christians whom we are bound to protect as our own brothers and sisters. We may not think of what they or the Parsis in self-defence or by way of reprisals have done to some of us.

You can see quite clearly that I must do the utmost reparation to this handful of men and women who have been the victims of forces that have come into being largely through my instrumentality. I invite every Hindu and Mussalman to do likewise. But I do not want any one to fast. Fasting is only good when it comes in answer to prayer and as a felt yearning of the soul. I invite every Hindu and Mussalman to retire to his home, ask God for forgiveness and to befriend the injured communities from the bottom of his heart.

I invite my fellow-workers not to waste a single word of sympathy for me. I need or deserve none. But I invite them to make a ceaseless effort to regain control over the turbulent elements. This is a terribly true struggle. There is no room for sham or humbug in it. Before we can make any further progress with our struggle, we must cleanse our hearts.

One special word to my Mussalman brothers. I have approached the *Khilafat* as a sacred cause. I have striven for Hindu-Muslim unity because India cannot

live free without it and because we would both deny God if we considered one another as natural enemies. I have thrown myself into the arms of the Ali Brothers because I believe them to be true and god-fearing men. The Mussalmans have, to my knowledge, played the leading part during the two days of carnage. It has deeply hurt me. I ask every Mussalman worker to rise to his full height, to realize his duty to his faith and see that the carnage stops.

May God bless every one of us with wisdom and courage to do the right at any cost !

I am,
Your Servant,
M. K. GANDHI

19th November, 1921.

GOOD AND BAD

"Only those who believe in non-violence need remain in the struggle. It could be conducted without difficulty and complications by a few staunch and true workers. It can only be harmed by insincere workers though many."

The reader will appreciate the statement that during these four days¹ I have been receiving accounts both good and bad. Non-co-operators injured. Hindus and Mussalmans assaulting Parsis. Parsis shooting them. Christians assaulting those wearing *Khadi* caps or dress. Hindus and Mussalmans assaulting Christians. These bits of information are interspersed with the news that Parsis are saving Hindus and Mussalmans from the other Parsis, some Christians saving Hindus and Mussalmans, the latter sheltering both, non-co-operators at great peril to their lives seeking to bring about peace. It has never been my misfortune to be torn between two powerful and conflicting emotions. And, then, to guide friends in such a difficult situation, to send them to enter the jaws of death and yet for me to avoid death. It is the fast that has been my outward staff and it is heart prayer that has been my inward strength. On the 17th, I felt as if all my strength had vanished. Why was I unable permanently to influence the crowd? Where was the power of *ahimsa* in me? What was I to do? I could not, I would not, ask the aggrieved parties to seek Government aid. We had no *Panchayats* to deal out justice. There was no one I could approach who could bring about peace. I could not and would not organize a trained physical force party. What relief could I give to the sufferers from mob-violence? If I allowed myself to be torn to pieces

¹ These days riots broke out in Bombay between the turbulent elements among the co-operators and non-co-operators over the issue of welcome to the Prince of Wales.

by justly incensed Parsis or Christians, I would only give rise to greater bloodshed. Whilst as a soldier I must avoid no unavoidable risk, I must not recklessly run the risk of being killed. Then, what was I to do? At last came the fast to my rescue, to soothe my soul. If I may not give myself to be killed through human agency, I must give myself to God to be taken away by refusing to eat till He heard my prayer. For me, a bankrupt, that was the only thing left. I could not draw upon the people from their innocence. They dishonoured the cheque I presented personally on the 17th. I must now somehow or other recoup lost credit or die in the attempt. I must draw upon God for further credit to enable me to transact His business. I could only do so by humbling myself, crawling in the dust before Him, denying myself the food He has given. I must, in a thousand ways, show Him that I am in earnest, and if I am not found worthy to conduct His business, ask Him to recall me and refashion me according to my worth and His will. And so I have taken up the fast. The news of the hurt received by co-workers or the hurt received by the combatants no longer perturbs me. For me, there is only my own non-violence as my help. If it does not answer, I must not worry. Thousands die in other parts of India and their deaths trouble me but do not worry me. Even so, in this case, if I could but do all I know, I need not *then* fret and fume. This fast, then, has been to me a penance, purification and reparation. It is also a warning to workers that they may not play with me in the movement. Only those who believe in non-violence need remain in the struggle. It could be conducted without difficulty and complications by a few staunch and true workers. It can only be harmed by insincere workers though many. Lastly, it is a remedy for hastening peace. But the last is the derivative end. It comes as a result of penance, purification and reparation. It is the credit sent by God.

WORKERS BEWARE

"Hindu-Muslim unity is not worth a day's purchase if it does not prefer the interests of smaller communities to its own. Christians and Jews in India are not foreigners, nor are Parsis. We must go out of our way to be friendly to them and to serve and help them, above all to protect them from harm from ourselves."

I am receiving remonstrances against the fast. Some have taken up sympathetic fast. I assure all these that they are wrong. For me fast was a necessity. I was the bankrupt. The business of others is to understand the situation, to rid themselves of violence, if any, to spread non-violence among others and believe that the slightest violence must injure the cause. They must take up the *Charkha*, they must promote, not merely Hindu-Muslim unity, but they must now promote unity among all communities. Hindu-Muslim unity is not worth a day's purchase if it does not prefer the interests of smaller communities to its own. Christians and Jews in India are not foreigners, nor are Parsis. We must go out of our way to be friendly to them and to serve and help them, above all, to protect them from harm from ourselves. The workers must similarly make friends with co-operators. They must not speak ill of them whether they are English or Indian. We must believe in the truth of our cause and in our capacity for self-suffering. We have, at any rate, for the time being, announced to the world in the name of God, that we do not propose to harm any Englishman no matter what he does to us. We shall be guilty before God and man if under the cover of our pledge we injure a single English or Indian co-operator.

THE FAST BROKEN

"I am too human not to be touched by the sorrows of others, and when I find no remedy for alleviating them, my human nature so agitates me that I pine to embrace death like a long-lost dear friend."

Gandhiji broke his fast in the midst of a gathering of co-operators, non-co-operators, Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis. There were speeches of good-will by a representative of each community. The members of the Working Committee were also present. Gandhiji made a statement in Gujarati before breaking his fast. The following is its translation :

Friends,

It delights my heart to see Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis and Christians met together in this little assembly. I hope that our frugal fruit-repast of this morning will be a sign of the permanent friendship. Though a born optimist, I am not in the habit of building castles in the air. The meeting, therefore, cannot deceive me. We shall be able to realize the hope of permanent friendship between all communities, only if we who have assembled together will incessantly strive to build it up. I am breaking my fast upon the strength of your assurances. I have not been unmindful of the affection with which innumerable friends have surrounded me during these four days. I shall ever remain grateful to them. I am plunging into this stormy ocean out of the haven of peace in which I have been during these few days. I assure you that in spite of the tal's of misery that have been poured into my ears, I have enjoyed peace because of a hungry stomach. I know that I cannot enjoy it after breaking the fast. I am too human not to be touched by the sorrows of others, and when I find no remedy for alleviating them, my human nature so agitates me that I pine to embrace death like a long-lost dear friend. There-

fore, I warn all the friends here that if real peace is not established in Bombay, and if disturbances break out again and if, as a result, they find me driven to a still severer ordeal, they must not be surprised or troubled. If they have any doubt about peace having been established, if each community has still bitterness of feeling and suspicion, and if we are all not prepared to forget and forgive past wrongs, I would much rather that they did not press me to break the fast. Such a restraint I would regard as a test of true friendship.

I venture to saddle special responsibility upon Hindus and Mussalmans. The majority of them are non-co-operators. Non-violence is the creed they have accepted for the time being. They have the strength of numbers. They can stand in spite of the opposition of the smaller communities without Government aid. If, therefore, they will remain friendly and charitable towards the smaller communities, all will be well. I will beseech the Parsis, the Christians and the Jews to bear in mind the new awakening in India. They will see many coloured waters in the ocean of Hindu and Mussalman humanity. They will see dirty waters on the shore. I would ask them to bear with their Hindu or Mussalman leaders through their own leaders with a view to getting justice. Indeed, I am hoping that as a result of the unfortunate discord a *Mahajan* will come into being for the disposal of all inter-racial disputes.

The value of this assembly, in my opinion, consists in the fact that worshippers of the same one God we are enabled to partake of this harmless repast together in spite of our differences of opinion. We have not assembled with the object to-day of reducing such differences, certainly not of surrendering the single principle we hold dear, but we have met in order to demonstrate that we can remain true to our principles and yet also remain free from ill-will towards one another.

May God bless our effort !

THE MORAL ISSUE

"The greater the coercion we use, the greater the security we give to the Government, if only because the latter has more effective weapons of coercion than we have. For us to resort to greater coercion than the Government will be to make India more slave than she is now."

As soon as we lose the moral basis, we cease to be religious. There is no such thing as religion overriding morality. Man, for instance, cannot be untruthful, cruel or incontinent, and claim to have God on his side. In Bombay, the sympathizers of Non-co-operation lost the moral balance. They were enraged against the Parsis and the Christians who took part in the welcome to the Prince and sought to 'teach them a lesson.' They invited reprisals and got them. It became after the 17th a game of see-saw in which no one really gained and everybody lost.

Swaraj does not lie that way. India does not want Bolshevism. The people are too peaceful to stand anarchy. They will bow the knee to any one who restores so-called order. Let us recognize the Indian psychology. We need not stop to inquire whether such hankering after peace is a virtue or a vice. The average Mussalman of India is quite different from the average Mussalman of the other parts of the world. His Indian associations have made him more docile than his co-religionists outside India. He will not stand tangible insecurity of life and property for any length of time. The Hindu is proverbially, almost contemptibly, mild. The Parsi and the Christian love peace more than strife. Indeed, we have almost made religion subservient to peace. This mentality is at once our weakness and our strength.

Let us nurse the better, the religious part of this mentality of ours. 'Let there be no compulsion in religion.' Is it not religion with us to observe *Swadeshi* and,

therefore, *Khadi*? But if the religion of others does not require them to adopt *Swadeshi*, we may not compel them. We broke the universal law re-stated in the Quran. And the law does not mean that there may be compulsion in other matters. The verse means that, if it is bad to use compulsion in religion about which we have definite convictions, it is worse to resort to it in matters of less moment.

We can only, therefore, argue and reason with our opponents. The extreme to which we may go is Non-violent Non-co-operation with them in private life, for we do not non-co-operate with the men composing the Government, we are non-co-operating with the system they administer. We decline to render official service to Sir George Lloyd, the Governor; we dare not withhold social service from Sir George Lloyd, the Englishman.

The mischief, I am sorry to say, began among the Hindus and the Mussalmans themselves. There was social persecution, there was coercion. I must confess that I did not always condemn it as strongly as I might have. I might have dissociated myself from the movement when it became at all general. We soon mended our ways, we became more tolerant but the subtle coercion was there. I passed it by as I thought it would die a natural death. I saw in Bombay that it had not. It assumed a virulent form on the 17th.

We damaged the *Khilafat* cause and with it that of the Punjab and *Swaraj*. We must retrace our steps and scrupulously insure minorities against the least molestation. If the Christian wishes to wear the European hat and unmentionables, he must be free to do so. If a Parsi wishes to stick to his *Fenta*, he has every right to do so. If they both see their safety in associating themselves with the Government, we may only wean them from their error by appealing to their reason, not by breaking their heads. The greater the coercion we use, the greater the security we give to the Government, if only because the latter has more effective weapons of coercion than we have. For us to resort to greater coercion than the Government will be to make India more slave than she is now.

Swaraj is freedom for every one, the smallest among us, to do as he likes without any physical interference with his liberty. Non-violent Non-co-operation is the method whereby we cultivate the freest public opinion and get it enforced. When there is complete freedom of opinion, that of the majority must prevail. If we are in a minority, we can prove worthy of our religion by remaining true to it in the face of coercion. The Prophet submitted to the coercion of the majority and remained true to his faith. And when he found himself in a majority, he declared to his followers that there should be no compulsion in religion. Let us not again, either by verbal or physical violence, depart from the injunction, and by our own folly further put back the hands of the clock of progress.

TO HAKIMJI

“Hindu-Muslim unity must be our creed to last for all time and under all circumstances. Nor must that unity be a menace to the minorities—the Parsis, the Christians, the Jews or the powerful Sikhs. If we seek to crush any of them, we shall some day want to fight each other.”

In the course of a letter to Hakim Ajmal Khan Sahib from Sabarmati Jail in 1922, Gandhiji referring to the need of Hindu-Muslim unity wrote :

I write this to you in your capacity as Chairman of the Working Committee and, therefore, leader of both Hindus and Mussalmans or better still of all India.

I write to you also as one of the foremost leaders of Mussalmans, but above all I write this to you as an esteemed friend. I have had the privilege of knowing you since 1915. Our daily growing association has enabled me to prize your friendship as a treasure. A staunch Mussalman, you have shown in your own life what Hindu-Muslim unity means.

We all now realize, as we have never before realized, that without that unity we cannot attain our freedom, and I make bold to say that without that unity the Mussalmans of India cannot render the *Khilafat* all the aid they wish. Divided, we must ever remain slaves. This unity, therefore, cannot be a mere policy to be discarded when it does not suit us. We can discard it only when we are tired of *Swaraj*. Hindu-Muslim unity must be our creed to last for all time and under all circumstances.

Nor must that unity be a menace to the minorities—the Parsis, the Christians, the Jews or the powerful Sikhs. If we seek to crush any of them, we shall some day want to fight each other.

I have been drawn so close to you chiefly because I know that you believe in Hindu-Muslim unity in the

full sense of the term.

This unity, in my opinion, is unattainable without our adopting non-violence as a firm policy. I call it a policy because it is limited to the preservation of that unity. But it follows that thirty crores of Hindus and Mussalmans, united not for a time but for all time, can defy all the powers of the world and should consider it a cowardly act to resort to violence in their dealings with the English administrators. We have hitherto feared them and their guns in our simplicity. The moment we realize our combined strength, we shall consider it unmanly to fear them and, therefore, ever to think of striking them. Hence am I anxious and impatient to persuade my countrymen to feel non-violent, not out of our weakness but out of our strength. But you and I know that we have not yet evolved the non-violence of the strong. And we have not done so, because the Hindu-Muslim union has not gone much beyond the stage of policy. There is still too much mutual distrust and consequent fear. I am not disappointed. The progress we have made in that direction is, indeed, phenomenal. We seem to have covered in eighteen months' time the work of a generation. But infinitely more is necessary. Neither the classes nor masses feel instinctively that our union is necessary as the breath of our nostrils.

For this consummation we must, it seems to me, rely more upon quality than quantity. Given a sufficient number of Hindus and Mussalmans, with almost a fanatical faith in everlasting friendship between the Hindus and the Mussalmans of India, it shall not be long before the unity permeates the masses. A few of us must first clearly understand that we can make no headway without accepting non-violence in thought, word and deed for the full realization of our political ambition. I would, therefore, beseech you and the members of the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee to see that our ranks contain no workers who do not fully realize the essential truth I have endeavoured to place before you. A living faith cannot be manufactured by the rule of majority.

To me, the visible symbol of all-India unity and, therefore, of the acceptance of non-violence as an indispensable means for the realization of our political ambition, is undoubtedly the *Charkha*, i.e., *Khaddar*. Only those who believe in *cultivating* a non-violent spirit and eternal friendship between Hindus and Mussalmans will daily and religiously spin. Universal hand-spinning and the universal manufacture and use of hand-spun and hand-woven *Khaddar* will be a substantial, if not absolute, proof of the real unity and non-violence. And it will be a recognition of a living kinship with the dumb masses. Nothing can possibly unify and revivify India as the acceptance by all India of the spinning-wheel as a daily sacrament and the *Khaddar* wear as a privilege and a duty.

THE MESSAGE TO THE COUNTRY

“Without unity between Hindus, Mahomedans, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians and other Indians, all talk of *Swaraj* is idle..... An indissoluble bond between the various communities must be established if we are to win freedom.”

Writing from sick-bed soon after his release from prison in 1924, Gandhiji, in the course of his letter to the late Maulana Mahomed Ali, the then President of the Indian National Congress, touched upon the Hindu-Muslim relations at the time as follows :

Though I know very little of the present situation in the country, I know sufficient to enable me to see that perplexing as the national problems were at the time of the Bardoli resolutions, they are far more perplexing to-day. It is clear that without unity between Hindus, Mahomedans, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians and other Indians, all talk of *Swaraj* is idle. This unity which I fondly believed in 1922 had been nearly achieved, has, so far as Hindus and Mussalmans are concerned, I observe, suffered a severe check. Mutual trust has given place to distrust. An indissoluble bond between the various communities must be established if we are to win freedom. Will the thanksgiving of the nation over my release be turned into a solid unity between the communities? That will restore me to health far quicker than any medical treatment or rest-cure. When I heard in the gaol of the tension between Hindus and Mussalmans in certain places, my heart sank within me. The rest I am advised to have, will be no rest with the burden of disunion preying upon me. I ask all those who cherish love towards me to utilize it in furtherance of the union we all desire. I know that the task is difficult. But nothing is difficult if we have a living faith in God. Let us realize our own weakness and approach Him and He

will surely help. It is weakness which breeds fear and fear breeds distrust. Let us both shed our fear, but I know that even if *one* of us will cease to fear, we shall cease to quarrel. Nay, I say that your tenure of office will be judged solely by what you can do in the cause of union. I know that we love each other as brothers. I ask you, therefore, to share my anxiety and help me to go through the period of illness with a lighter heart.

PLEA FOR PATIENCE

“For me, the attainment of *Swaraj* depends not upon what the English Cabinet thinks or says, but entirely upon a proper, satisfactory and lasting solution of the thorny problem. Without it, all before us is dark. With it, *Swaraj* is within immediate reach.”

Some correspondents are anxious for my views on councils entry and Hindu-Muslim questions. Others are equally insistent that I make no hasty pronouncement. I am myself most eager to express my opinion on both these questions, but I want to avoid all avoidable mistakes. I owe a duty to those who differ from me. They are valued co-workers. They love their country just as much as I claim to do. Some of them have recent sacrifices to their credit, to which I can lay no claim. They have a longer first-hand experience of the country than I have. Their opinions, therefore, deserve all the respect and consideration that are due to their position and ability. Above all, I must not embarrass them by any ill-considered opinion. Theirs is a thankless task. The Government have rejected every advance made by them. The former have stood defiant behind their armed entrenchments, even in such trifles (to them) as the removal of the prohibition against Mr. Horniman and the release of Maulana Hasrat Mohani. In these circumstances, it would be improper on my part, without the utmost consideration, to say anything that may in any way disturb the plans the Swarajists may develop for meeting the emergency. I am trying to grasp the situation and understand their viewpoint. Nothing can possibly be lost by patience. Haste may cause unnecessary mischief.

The same may be said of the Hindu-Muslim question with greater emphasis. It is a problem that requires the most delicate handling. Every thought has to be examined. Every word weighed. A hasty adjective may cause

an explosion. Though, therefore, I hold decided views on the question, and am most anxious to express them, I must forbear. Both Hindus and Mussalmans occupying front positions in the community are asking me not to say a word without fully studying the situation. I have a letter which goes so far as to say that I shall know little until I have travelled and seen things for myself. Without going so far with my correspondents, I give my assurance to them, and all who think with them, that I shall not write or say a word without a careful and prayerful study of the question. For me, the attainment of *Swaraj* depends not upon what the English Cabinet thinks or says, but entirely upon a proper, satisfactory and lasting solution of the thorny problem. Without it, all before us is dark. With it, *Swaraj* is within immediate reach.

Whilst, therefore, these conferences are going on, I respectfully urge those, who are interested in my opinion on these important questions, to go on with the constructive programme. Every yard of yarn spun or *Khaddar* woven is a step towards *Swaraj*. Every one who refrains from harbouring an evil thought of his Hindu or Mussalman brother, as the case may be, contributes to the solution. Every writer in the press who economizes his adjectives and ceases to impute motives or inflame public opinion makes easy the path to a proper solution. The other day *The Times of India* published illuminating extracts from the vernacular press showing the present mentality of some writers. They tell us how not to do the thing. Granting that a Hindu or a Mussalman utters a hasty word, it is no business of a pressman, who wishes well to his country, immediately to advertise it. It would be criminal to exaggerate such blunders. I am not sure that the statements advertised in those extracts were even made by the parties concerned. No expression of opinion from anybody is needed to demonstrate the necessity of being accurate, of curbing our tongues and checking our pens.

CAMPAIGN OF MISREPRESENTATION

“My creed is truth and non-violence in their extreme form. I may be wrong. But if I wish well to my friends, I cannot but wish that they may have the same creed so long as I continue to believe it to be the best.”

At the present moment, there seems to be a wilful attempt being made to widen the gulf between Hindus and Mussalmans. Some newspapers, both Hindu and Muslim, are leaving no stone unturned to inflame passions and, unfortunately, they do not hesitate to resort to exaggeration and even misrepresentation. Where they are not themselves consciously guilty of such methods, they recklessly copy without verification everything in the nature of a sensation that appears in any other newspaper.

One such statement was made with reference to Maulana Mahomed Ali. He was reported to have said that an adulterous Mussalman was better than myself. That there should have been found any person willing to believe such a thing of Maulana Mahomed Ali, shows the degree of tension that exists between Hindus and Mussalmans. The reader will find in another column a translation of the two letters¹ written by the Maulana, one to Swami Shri Shraddhanandji and the other to *The Tej*. In my opinion, the letters dispose of, once for all, the calumny against the Maulana that has been going the round of the Press. Enemies of India's freedom have not hesitated to distort the Maulana's statement and use it for the purpose of setting the Hindus against the Maulana Saheb. I venture to commend his letters to the attention of every thoughtful Hindu. The letters, in my humble opinion, demonstrate the transparent honesty of the Maulana.

¹ Given at the end of this article.

What is the original statement which has been so cruelly distorted by some newspapers? He says, in effect, that the creed of Islam is better than my creed. Is there anything offensive in the statement? So long as there are different religions, is not the Maulana's position the only logical and honest one? I have very dear Christian friends in South Africa and in India. They pray for light for me. One of them, a retired solicitor of standing in South Africa, urges me to accept Jesus Christ and his salvation. He says that without that all my effort will be useless. Thousands of Christians certainly hold that a righteous man without belief in Jesus Christ is less than an adulterous Christian. Does an orthodox Hindu fare better? If he does, why is there all this feverish agitation regarding *Shuddhi*? In making the choice of a husband for his daughter, will he choose the best character irrespective of religion, or the best man in his own sect? And, if he will restrict the choice to his own circle, does it not show that he, too, like the Maulana, believes that his creed is the best of all?

The Maulana has stated the religious law in picturesque language, and feeling safe, as he had a right to do, that I could not be offended, he chose me as one of his best Hindu friends for his illustration and showed that his creed he held superior to persons, no matter how dear they might be to him. I hold that he deserves to be honoured for the staunchness of his faith rather than be accused of coldness for a friend or disrespect for the latter's creed.

Nor need his prayers for me, that I should find it in my heart to accept Islam, cause any alarm or surprise. He would not be a true friend if he did not wish the best (according to his belief) for me. My creed is truth and non-violence in their extreme form. I may be wrong. But if I wish well to my friends, I cannot but wish that they may have the same creed so long as I continue to believe it to be the best. I remain within the Hindu fold because it stands best the test laid down by my creed.

The Swamiji in his note, whilst heartily and unreservedly accepting the Maulana's letter, remarked that his

creed made no difference between practice and profession, as the Maulana's appeared to him to do. The second letter of the Maulana clears up the point and clinches the whole argument when he says that his creed, too, does not divorce practice from profession. He adds that in his letter he merely compared the world's creeds as creeds, and gave his opinion that his was the best. Could he do otherwise and still be a Mussalman? If he thought otherwise, would he not, then, as an honest man be bound to profess the creed he considered better than that of Islam?

I hope that the heart of every true Hindu will go out to Mahomed Ali when, in the midst of his domestic bereavement and the sickness of his great brother, he is trying his utmost to heal the breach between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Surely, Hindus who strive for unity have enough fanaticism within to recognize that Mussalman co-workers fare no better.

The other incident is reported to have occurred in the Tibbya College. I asked my son to write to Dr. Ansari to let me know what actually did happen. I quote his reply in full except six words which give the name of the newspaper which has been offending against the law of self-restraint and verification. I omit the name because the purpose is not to select newspapers for criticism, but to find a remedy for the disease that has become rampant in the Press. Dr. Ansari writes :

"The incident in the Tibbya College is a very petty one. On the day of the celebration of Mahatmaji's birthday in the Tibbya College, one of the speakers compared him to Jesus Christ to which a Muslim student took exception and observed that no living person, however eminent in all respects, should be compared to prophets. Some of the students protested against the Muslim student's remark, upon which the latter tried to explain what he had meant and regretted that he was misunderstood. This is the whole story and it is evidently absurd to suggest that members of the staff were involved in it, or that there was the slightest likelihood of a breach of peace.

"The papers which you mention are extremely partisan ones, whose characteristic feature it is to purvey news calculated to set one community against the other, and to present trifling incidents in a very highly exaggerated form. It would not have

been so very sad if these papers alone were to blame, because they are neither important nor well-known. But the misfortune is that the spirit of animosity is swaying almost all the vernacular papers—Hindu and Muslim—in Northern India.

“Nor are the incidents referred to by you the only ones in reporting which these papers have betrayed such a deplorable and narrow-minded bigotry. Blind fanaticism, and a reprehensible desire to run the other community down by every means, has to-day become an essential part of the life of a vernacular paper of Northern India.”

The newspaper readers know the exaggerated manner in which the incident has been described. The Muslim student who took exception to the comparison was after all justified in so doing. It is not necessary for the purpose of honouring a man to compare him with any other honoured man, much less with revered prophets. The information Dr. Ansari gives, about the vernacular press in Northern India, is calculated to cause alarm and anxiety. It is to be hoped that the papers which make a living out of sensations will put patriotism and truth before their pockets. I have heard it suggested that Muslim editors say they will cease to revile Hindus and Hinduism when the Hindu editors leave off reviling Islam and Mussalmans. Hindu editors want to reverse the process. I suggest that both make the desired improvement simultaneously.

I do not wish to suggest that truth should be hushed. There has been that kind of indelicate delicacy before now. What is necessary, however, is that whilst truth may be fearlessly told, exaggeration and innuendo should be scrupulously avoided.

* * * *

The following are the material portions of the letter, referred to above in the article, addressed by Maulana Mahomed Ali to Swami Shradhdhanandji, the letter addressed to The Tej being to similar effect :

“Some Mussalman friends have been constantly flinging at me the charge of being a worshipper of Hindus and a Gandhi-worshipper. The real object of these gentlemen was to alienate from me the Mussalman community, the Khilafat Committee and the

Congress, by representing that I had become a follower of Mahatma Gandhi in my religious principles. I had, therefore, on several occasions plainly declared that in the matter of religion, I professed the same beliefs as any other true Mussalman, and as such I claimed to be a follower of the Prophet Mahomed (on him be peace!) and not of Gandhiji. And further, that since I hold Islam to be the highest gift of God, therefore, I was impelled by the love I bear towards Mahatmaji to pray to God that He might illumine his soul with the true light of Islam. I wish, however, to emphatically declare that I hold that to-day neither the representatives of Islam nor of the Hindu, Jewish, Nazarene or Parsi faiths can present another instance of such high character and moral worth as Gandhiji, and that is the reason why I hold him in such high reverence and affection. I deeply revere my own mother, and if contentment and gratefulness under all circumstances be the true meaning of Islam, I claim there is no person, howsoever well-versed in religion, who has understood it better than she. Similarly, I regard Maulana Abdul Bari as my religious guide. His loving kindness holds me in bondage. I deeply admire his sincerity of heart. But in spite of all this, I make bold to say that I have not yet found any person who in actual character is entitled to a higher place than Mahatma Gandhi.

"But between belief and actual character there is a wide difference. As a follower of Islam, I am bound to regard the creed of Islam as superior to that professed by the followers of any non-Islamic religion. And in this sense the creed of even a fallen and degraded Mussalman is entitled to a higher place than that of any other non-Muslim, irrespective of his high character, even though the person in question be Mahatma Gandhi himself.

"At Lucknow, when just before the commencement of my speech, some one placed a printed copy of the question in reference in my hand for reply (copies of which had also been freely distributed among the audience), I had stated that I did not want to answer any such questions, as I did not consider that any one, unless he could prove that he bore a greater affection towards Mahatmaji than I did, was entitled to charge me with having reviled him. It was only when I was told that the point at issue was not that I had reviled Mahatmaji, but that I had reviled the Hindu religion, that I gave the above-stated reply. A report of my speech had appeared in *The Hamdam* at that time, *i.e.*, about one month back. I had said further therein that ever, Christian believed that a Christian, however degraded or fallen, was entitled to a higher place in regard to the matter of belief, as contradistinguished from actual character, than any Mussalman or Jew irrespective of his high character, and the same was the case with Hindus or followers of any other religion. My reply proved so satisfactory that, as I have already mentioned, a Hindu friend shouted out that 22 crores of Hindus were prepared to stand by

me, and several Hindu members of the audience acclaimed it with cries of '*Bande Mataram*', '*Allaho Akbar*,' while the persons who had brought the printed copies of the question were completely silenced."

WHAT IS HINDUISM?

"Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after Truth, and if to-day it has become moribund, inactive, irresponsive to growth, it is because we are fatigued and as soon the fatigue is over, Hinduism will burst forth upon the world with a brilliance perhaps unknown before."

A dear friend sends me a letter gently criticizing the manner of my defence of Maulana Mahomed Ali's now famous speech regarding his comparison of creeds. The friend says that I have not been fair to Hinduism in that I have said a Hindu will fare no better than the Maulana. He quarrels with my illustration about marriage, and then goes on to show the beauties of Hinduism. Another friend, too, has made a similar remonstrance and added that many others share his opinion.

These friends have, in my opinion, mixed up the question of propriety of comparing creeds with that of the allocation of their respective merits. Indeed, in arguing that Hinduism is not like Islam and that a Hindu could not think like the Maulana, the friends themselves have subscribed to the Maulana's argument that it is not only perfectly correct, but it is the logical outcome of one's preferring a particular belief to every other, that for oneself that particular belief, though held by a bad man, is superior to that of another howsoever saintly.

I adhere to the marriage illustration chosen by me, though I now see that it would have been better for me to have avoided it. It is not a conclusive illustration. There are, I admit, with my critics many reasons for confining the choice of a husband to a particular class. But I do claim that the predominant reason for excluding the best man, if he happens to belong, as he often does, to another class or caste, is his creed. A Brahman parent chooses a Brahman as a husband for his daughter because he prefers the general body of opinion, which may be

called creed, held by his clan. Underlying the preference is, no doubt, the belief that acceptance of a creed ultimately involves practice in accordance with it. A narrow creed, if it is honestly believed, has necessarily a limited field for practice. A creed, for instance, that makes it obligatory to offer human sacrifice will never free the believer from the taint of religious murder, unless he gives up the creed. Thus it is that we find people, otherwise most moral, disappointing us when they fall short of the highest because of their narrow creed. Many sincere and otherwise noble-minded Hindus consider untouchability as a part of the Hindu creed, and would, therefore, regard the reformers as out-castes. If untouchability was a part of the Hindu creed, I should decline to call myself a Hindu and most decidedly embrace some other faith if it satisfied my highest aspirations. Fortunately for me, I hold that untouchability is no part of Hinduism. On the contrary, it is a serious blot upon it, which every lover of it must sacrifice himself to remove. Suppose, however, I discovered that untouchability was really an integral part of Hinduism, I should have to wander in the wilderness because the other creeds, as I know them through their accepted interpreters, would not satisfy my highest aspirations.

My correspondent accuses me of the crime of using the ambiguous middle in that I have confused Truth and Non-violence with the Hindu creed. The crime is deliberate. It is the good fortune or the misfortune of Hinduism that it has no official creed. In order, therefore, to protect myself against any misunderstanding I have said Truth and Non-violence is my creed. If I were asked to define the Hindu creed I should simply say: Search after Truth through non-violent means. A man may not believe even in God and still call himself a Hindu. Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after Truth, and if to-day it has become moribund, inactive, irresponsive to growth, it is because we are fatigued and as soon as the fatigue is over, Hinduism will burst forth upon the world with a brilliance perhaps unknown before. Of course, therefore, Hinduism is the most tolerant of all religions. Its

creed is all-embracing. But that is to claim superiority for the Hindu creed over all the other creeds of the world. As I write these lines, I feel a crowd of sectarians whispering to me: 'That is no Hinduism you are defining, come to us and we will show you the Truth.' I am confounding all these whisperers by saying: '*Neti Neti*—not that, my friends, not that,' and they make confusion worse confounded by retorting with redoubled fury: 'Not that, not that.' But still another voice whispers to me: 'Why all this duelling—this war of words? I can show you a way out of it. It lies through silent prayer.' For the moment I propose to listen to that voice and observe silence and ask my friends to do likewise. Possibly, I have failed to convince them and their co-sharers in their opinion. If I have failed to convince, it is because I have not seen the light. I can give my assurance that I have not indulged in special pleading in order to defend Maulana Mahomed Ali. If I discover my error, I hope I shall have the courage to own it. The Maulana needs no defence from me. And I should be a false friend if, in order to defend him, I sacrificed an iota of truth. It is the special privilege of a friend to own the other's faults and re-declare his affection in spite of faults.

HINDU-MUSLIM TENSION IN SIND

“Whoever is to blame, there should be an understanding between the parties that no one can take the law into his own hands. The parties may go to court if they cannot arbitrate, but overawing of one party by another can only end in bloodshed eventually. That is hardly the way of religion.”

Dr. Choithram has sent me newspaper cuttings which give a fair idea of the trouble that seems to be brewing in Sind. I have no desire to go into the facts of the case. There was an attempt to settle the Hindu-Muslim dispute by arbitration. Dr. Choithram and Seth Haji Abdulla Haroon have had their say in the Press. Seth Haji Abdulla Haroon says that there could be no arbitration before change of hearts. Whatever the cause, the failure of arbitration is unfortunate. But the painful part of the whole affair is that the Hindus do not feel that they are safe, and that the police guard the route in the affected area. If this is true, there is something radically wrong. Whoever is to blame, there should be an understanding between the parties that no one can take the law into his own hands. The parties may go to court if they cannot arbitrate, but overawing of one party by another can only end in bloodshed eventually. That is hardly the way of religion.

I assure my Hindu and Mussalman friends that I am feverishly anxious to disburden my soul of my views on Hindu-Muslim unity. I am simply waiting for friends who have asked me not to say anything till they and I have discussed the question. The accounts I receive daily of the tension show that the greatest question before the country is that of Hindu-Muslim unity and no other. I hope that a way will be found out of the present most unsatisfactory state of things.

HINDU-MUSLIM TENSION : ITS CAUSE AND CURE

“I see no way of achieving anything in this afflicted country without a lasting heart unity between Hindus and Mussalmans of India. I believe in the immediate possibility of achieving it, because it is so natural, so necessary for both, and because I believe in human nature.”

Hindu Indictment

Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi brought a message from a Hindu residing in Tanganaika to the following effect : “Tell Gandhi he is responsible for the Muslim atrocities in Multan.” I did not print the message before, as I was not ready to write then upon the question of questions. But many letters have since been received by me, some from well-known friends, telling me that I was responsible even for the alleged Moplah atrocities, in fact for all the riots in which Hindus have or are said to have suffered since the *Khilafat* agitation. The argument is somewhat this : ‘You asked the Hindus to make common cause with the Mussalmans in the *Khilafat* question. Your being identified with it gave it an importance it would never have otherwise received. It unified and awakened the Mussalmans. It gave a prestige to the *Maulvis* which they never had before. And now that the *Khilafat* question is over, the awakened Mussalmans have proclaimed a kind of *jehad* against us Hindus.’ I have given the purport of the charge in readable language. Some letters contain unprintable abuse.

So much for the Hindu part of the indictment against me.

Mussalman Indictment

A Mussalman friend says :

“The Muslim community being a very simple and religious com-

munity were led to believe that the *Khilafat* was in danger and that it could be saved by the united voice of Hindus and Mahomedans; these innocent people believing your very eloquent words showed great enthusiasm with the result that they were the first to boycott schools, law-courts, Councils, etc. The most famous institution of Aligarh, which Sir Syed had built by the labour of his life-time, and which was justly the first institution of its kind, was utterly spoilt. I shall be very much obliged, if you will kindly point out that the Hindu community had a similar institution, and it met with the same fate. I know of scores of boys who could have taken the university degree with credit to themselves and the community to which they belonged, but they were induced to leave studies on religious grounds, with the result that they were utterly ruined. On the contrary, very few Hindu boys left, and those who did so for the time being instantly joined, as soon as they found that the movement was tottering to pieces. Similar was the case with lawyers. In those days, you brought about a sort of unity between the two communities and advertised it far and near that it was a solid one. The simple-minded Mahomedans again believed it with the result that they were brutally treated at Ajmer, Lucknow, Meerut, Agra, Saharanpur, Lahore and other places. Mr. Mahomed Ali, who was a born journalist of a very high type, and whose wonderful paper, *The Comrade*, was doing such solid work for the Muslim community, was won over to your side, and he is now a loss to the community. Your Hindu leaders in the guise of *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* are trying to weaken the Muslim community. Your short-sighted decision to prevent people from entering the Councils has acted most unfairly on this community, as the majority of able men refrained from entering the Councils because of the so-called *fatwa*. Under the circumstances, do you not honestly think that you are doing a great harm to this community by keeping the Mahomedans, a few of them, of course, still in your camp?"

I have not given the whole of the letter. But the extract represents the gist of the Muslim indictment against me.

Not Guilty

I must plead not guilty to both the charges, and add that I am totally unrepentant. Had I been a prophet and foreseen all that has happened, I should have still thrown myself into the *Khilafat* agitation. In spite of the present strained relations between the two communities, both have gained. The awakening among the masses was

a necessary part of the training. It is itself a tremendous gain. I would do nothing to put the people to sleep again. Our wisdom consists now in directing the awakening in the proper channel. What we see before us is sad but not disheartening, if we have faith in ourselves. The storm is but the forerunner of the coming calm that comes from a consciousness of strength, not from the stupor of exhaustion and disappointment.

The public will not expect me to give judgment upon the riots in the different places. I have no desire for giving judgments. And even if I had, I have not the facts before me.

Moplahs

I will say a word as to the causes.

The Malabar happenings undoubtedly disquieted the Hindu mind. What the truth is, no one knows. The Hindus say that the Moplah atrocities were indescribable. Dr. Mahmud tells me that these have been grossly exaggerated, that the Moplahs, too, had a grievance against the Hindus, and that he could find no cases of forcible conversions. The one case that was reported to him was at least 'non-proven.' In his findings, Dr. Mahmud says he is supported by Hindu testimony. I merely mention the two versions to ask the public to conclude with me that it is impossible to arrive at the exact truth, and that it is unnecessary for the purpose of regulating our future conduct.

Multan, etc.

In Multan, Saharanpur, Agra, Ajmer, etc., it is agreed that the Hindus suffered most. In Palwal, it is stated that Hindus have prevented Mussalmans from turning a *kutchha* mosque into a *pucca* one. They are said to have pulled down part of the *pucca* wall, driven the Muslims out of the village, and stated that the Muslims could not live in the village unless they promised not to build any mosque and say *azan*. This state of things is said to have continued for over a year. The driven Mussalmans are said to be living in temporary huts near Rohtak.

In Byade, in Dharwar district, my informant tells me, on Muslims objecting to music being played before their mosque, the Hindus desecrated the mosque, beat the Mussalmans, and then got them prosecuted.

Here again I cite these two instances, not as proved facts, but to show that the Mussalmans, too, claim to have much to complain of against Hindus.

And, it can certainly be fairly added that where they were manifestly weak and Hindus strong, as in Katarpur and Arrah years ago, they were mercilessly treated by their Hindu neighbours. The fact is that when blood boils, prejudice reigns supreme; man, whether he labels himself Hindu, Mussalman, Christian or what not, becomes a beast and acts as such.

The Seat of the Trouble

The seat of the trouble, however, is in the Punjab. The Mussalmans complain that the Hindus have raised a storm of protest on Mr. Fazl-i-Hussain trying very timidly to give a fair proportion of Government employment to Mussalmans. The letter, from which I have already quoted, complains bitterly that wherever a Hindu has been the head of a department, he has carefully excluded Mussalmans from Government posts.

The causes for the tension are thus more than merely religious. The charges I have quoted are individual. But the mass mind is a reflection of individual opinion.

Tired of Non-violence

The immediate cause is the most dangerous. The thinking portion seems to be tired of non-violence. It has not as yet understood my suspension of *satyagraha* after Ahmedabad and Viramgam tragedies, then after the Bombay rowdyism, and lastly after the Chauri Chaura outrage. The last was the last straw. The thinking men imagined that all hope of *satyagraha* and, therefore, of *Swaraj*, too, in the near future, was at an end. Their faith in non-violence was skin-deep. Two years ago, a Mussalman friend said to me in all sincerity: 'I do not believe in your non-violence. At least I would not have

my Mussalmans to learn it. Violence is the law of life. I would not have *Swaraj* by non-violence as you define the latter. I must hate my enemy.' This friend is an honest man. I entertain great regard for him. Much the same has been reported of another very great Mussalman friend of mine. The report may be untrue, but the reporter himself is not an untrue man.

Hindu Repugnance

Nor is this repugnance to non-violence confined to Mussalmans. Hindu friends have said the same thing, if possible, with greater vehemence. My claim to Hinduism has been rejected by some, because I believe and advocate non-violence in its extreme form. They say that I am a Christian in disguise. I have been even seriously told that I am distorting the meaning of the Gita, when I ascribe to that great poem the teaching of unadulterated non-violence. Some of my Hindu friends tell me that killing is a duty enjoined by the Gita under certain circumstances. A very learned *Shastri*, only the other day, scornfully rejected my interpretation of the Gita, and said that there was no warrant for the opinion held by some commentators that the Gita represented the eternal duel between forces of evil and good, and inculcated the duty of eradicating evil within us without hesitation, without tenderness.

I state these opinions against non-violence in detail, because it is necessary to understand them if we would understand the solution I have to offer.

What I see around me to-day is, therefore, a reaction against the spread of non-violence. I feel the wave of violence coming. The Hindu-Muslim tension is an acute phase of this tiredness.

I must be dismissed out of consideration. My religion is a matter solely between my Maker and myself. If I am a Hindu, I cannot cease to be one even though I may be disowned by the whole of the Hindu population. I do, however, suggest that non-violence is the end of all religions.

Limited Non-violence

But I have never presented to India that extreme form of non-violence, if only because I do not regard myself fit enough to re-deliver that ancient message. Though my intellect has fully understood and grasped it, it has not as yet become part of my whole being. My strength lies in my asking people to do nothing that I have not tried repeatedly in my own life. I am, then, asking my countrymen to-day to adopt non-violence as their final creed, only for the purpose of regulating the relations between the different races, and for the purpose of attaining *Swaraj*. Hindus and Mussalmans, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis must not settle their differences by resort to violence. This I venture to place before India, not as a weapon of the weak, but of the strong. Hindus and Mussalmans prate about no compulsion in religion. What is it but compulsion, if Hindus will kill a Mussalman for saving a cow? It is like wanting to convert a Mussalman to Hinduism by force. And, similarly, what is it but compulsion, if Mussalmans seek to prevent by force Hindus from playing music before mosques? Virtue lies in being absorbed in one's prayers in the presence of din and noise. We shall both be voted irreligious savages by posterity, if we continue to make a futile attempt to compel one another to respect our religious wishes. Again, a nation of three hundred million people should be ashamed to have to resort to force to bring to book one hundred thousand Englishmen. To convert them, or, if you will, even to drive them out of the country, we need, not the force of arms, but the force of will. If we have not the latter, we shall never get the former. If we develop the force of will, we shall find that we do not need the force of arms.

Acceptance of non-violence, therefore, for the purposes mentioned by me, is the most natural and the most necessary condition of our national existence. It will teach us to husband our corporate physical strength for a better purpose, instead of dissipating it, as now, in a useless fratricidal strife, in which each party is exhausted

after the effort. And every armed rebellion must be an insane act unless it is backed by the nation. But almost any item of Non-co-operation fully backed by the nation can achieve the aim without shedding a single drop of blood.

I do not say: 'Eschew violence in your dealing with robbers or thieves or with nations that may invade India.' But in order that we are better able to do so, we must learn to restrain ourselves. It is a sign not of strength but of weakness to take up the pistol on the slightest pretext. Mutual fisticuffs are a training, not in violence, but in emasculation. My method of non-violence can never lead to loss of strength, but it alone will make it possible, if the nation wills it, to offer disciplined and concerted violence in time of danger.

Not Truly Non-violent

If those who believe that we were becoming supine and inert because of the training in non-violence, will but reflect a little, they will discover that we have never been non-violent in the only sense in which the word must be understood. Whilst we have refrained from causing actual physical hurt, we have harboured violence in our breast. If we had honestly regulated our thought and speech in the strictest harmony with our outward act, we would never have experienced the fatigue we are doing. Had we been true to ourselves, we would have by this time evolved matchless strength of purpose and will.

I have dwelt at length upon the mistaken view of non-violence, because I am sure that if we can but revert to our faith, if we ever had any, in non-violence limited only to the two purposes above referred to, the present tension between the two communities will largely subside. For, in my opinion, an attitude of non-violence in our mutual relations is an indispensable condition prior to a discussion of the remedies for the removal of the tension. It must be common cause between the two communities that neither party shall take the law into its own hands, but that all points in dispute, wherever and whenever they

arise, shall be decided by reference either to private arbitration, or to the law courts if they wish. This is the whole meaning of non-violence, so far as communal matters are concerned. To put it another way, just as we do not break one another's heads in respect of civil matters, so may we not do even in respect of religious matters. This is the only pact that is immediately necessary between the parties, and I am sure that everything else will follow.

The Bully and the Coward

Unless this elementary condition is recognized, we have no atmosphere for considering the ways and means of removing misunderstanding and arriving at an honourable, lasting settlement. But, assuming that the acceptance of the elementary condition will be common cause between the two communities, let us consider the constant disturbing factors. There is no doubt in my mind that in the majority of quarrels the Hindus come out second best. But my own experience confirms the opinion that the Mussalman as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu as a rule is a coward.¹ I have noticed this in railway trains, on public roads, and in the quarrels which I had the privilege of settling. Need the Hindu blame the Mussalman for his cowardice? Where there are cowards, there will always be bullies. They say that in Saharanpur the Mussalmans looted houses, broke open safes and in one case a Hindu woman's modesty was outraged. Whose fault was this? Mussalmans can offer no defence for the execrable conduct, it is true. But I, as a Hindu, am more ashamed of Hindu cowardice than I am angry at the Mussalman bullying. Why did not the owners of the houses looted die in the attempt to defend their possessions? Where were the relatives of the outraged sister at the time of the outrage? Have they no account to render of themselves? My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, I

¹ See *What May Hindus Do?*—p. 131.

can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery. And, in my own experience, I have had no difficulty in demonstrating to men trained in the school of violence the superiority of non-violence. As a coward, which I was for years, I harboured violence. I began to prize non-violence only when I began to shed cowardice. Those Hindus who ran away from the post of duty, when it was attended with danger, did so not because they were non-violent, or because they were afraid to strike, but because they were unwilling to die or even suffer any injury. A rabbit that runs away from the bull-terrier is not particularly non-violent. The poor thing trembles at the sight of the terrier and runs for very life. Those Hindus who ran away to save their lives would have been truly non-violent and would have covered themselves with glory and added lustre to their faith and won the friendship of their Mussalman assailants, if they had stood bare breast with smiles on their lips, and died at their post. They would have done less well, though still well, if they had stood at their post and returned blow. If the Hindus wish to convert the Mussalman bully into a respecting friend, they have to learn to die in the face of the heaviest odds.

The Way

The way, however, does not lie through *akhdas*; not that I mind them. On the contrary, I want them for physical culture. Then, they should be for all. But, if they are meant as a preparation for self-defence in the Hindu-Mussalman conflicts, they are fore-doomed to failure. Mussalmans can play the same game and such preparations, secret or open, do but cause suspicion and irritation. They can provide no present remedy. It is for the thoughtful few to make quarrels impossible by making arbitration popular and obligatory.

The remedy against cowardice is not physical culture, but the braving of dangers. So long as parents of the middle class Hindus, themselves timid, continue to

transmit their timidity by keeping their grown-up children in cotton-wool, so long will there be the desire to shun danger and run no risks. They will have to dare to leave their children alone, let them run risks, and even at times get killed in so doing. The puniest individual may have a stout heart. The most muscular Zulus cower before English lads. Each village has to find out its stout hearts.

The Goondas

It is a mistake to blame the *goondas*. They never do mischief, unless we create an atmosphere for them. I was eye-witness to what happened in Bombay on the Prince's day in 1921. We sowed the seed and the *goondas* reaped the harvest. Our men were at their back. I have no hesitation in holding the respectable Mussalmans (not all, in any single case) responsible for the misdeeds in Multan, Saharanpur and elsewhere, as I have done in holding respectable Hindus responsible for the misdeeds in Katarpur and Arrah. If it is true that at Palwal we have prevented the crection of a *pucca* mosque in the place of *kutchha* one, it is not the *goondas* who are doing it, it is the respectable Hindus who must be held accountable. We must resolutely discountenance the practice of absolving the respectable class from blame.

Therefore, I hold that Hindus will commit a grave blunder, if they organize Hindu *goondas* for defence. From the frying pan they will jump into fire. The Bania and the Brahman must learn to defend himself even violently, if not non-violently, or surrender his women-folk and possessions to the *goondas*. They are a class apart, whether they are labelled Mussalman or Hindu. It was said with gusto that protected by untouchables (for, they feared not death) a Hindu procession (playing triumphant music) quite recently passed a mosque unhurt.

It is a very mundane use to make of a sacred cause. Such exploitation of our untouchable brothers can neither serve Hinduism in general, nor the suppressed classes in particular. A few processions, so doubtfully protected, may pass a few mosques safely. But it can only aggravate the growing tension, and degrade Hinduism.

The middle class people must be prepared for a beating, if they wish to play music in the teeth of opposition, or they must befriend Mussalmans in a self-respecting manner.

The Hindus have to do penance for the past and still continuing disabilities imposed by them upon the suppressed brothers. There can be no question, therefore, of expecting any return from them for a debt we owe them. If we use them to cover our cowardice, we shall raise in them false hopes we shall never be able to fulfil; and if the retribution comes, it will be a just punishment for our inhuman treatment of them. If I have any influence with Hindus, I would beseech them not to use them as a shield against anticipated Mussalman attack.

Growing Distrust

Another potent cause of the tension is the growing distrust even among the best of us. I have been warned against Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji. He is suspected of secret motives. It is said that he is no friend of the Mussalmans. He is even credited with being jealous of my influence. I have the privilege of knowing him intimately ever since my return to India in 1915. I have had the privilege of closest communion with him. I regard him as one of the best among Hindus, who, though orthodox, holds most liberal views. He is no enemy of Mussalmans. He is incapable of jealousy of any one. He has a heart large enough to accommodate even his enemies. He has never aimed at power. And what he has, is due to a long period of unbroken service of the Motherland, such as very few of us can boast. He and I are temperamentally different, but love each other like brothers. There never has been even so much as a jar between us. Our ways being different, there can be no question of rivalry and, therefore, jealousy either.

Another one distrusted is Lala Lajpatrai. I have found him to be frank as a child. His record of sacrifice is almost unequalled. I have had not one, but many a chat on the Hindu-Muslim question with him. He is no enemy of the Mussalmans. But I confess that he has his

doubts about the immediate attainment of unity. He is seeking light from on High. He believes in that unity in spite of himself because, as he told me, he believes in *Swaraj*. He recognizes that without that unity there can be no *Swaraj*. He only does not know how and when it can be attained. He likes my solution but he doubts if the Hindus will understand and appreciate its nobility (as he calls it). Let me say, in passing, I do not call my solution noble. I hold it to be strictly just and the only feasible solution.

Swami Shraddhanandji also is distrusted. His speeches are, I know, often irritating. But even he wants Hindu-Muslim unity. Unfortunately, he believes in the possibility of bringing every Muslim into the Aryan fold, just as, perhaps, most Mussalmans think that every non-Muslim will some day become a convert to Islam. Shraddhanandji is intrepid and brave. Single-handed, he turned a wilderness into a magnificent boarding college on the banks of the sacred Ganges. He has faith in himself and his mission. But he is hasty and easily ruffled. He inherits the traditions of the Arya Samaj. I have profound respect for Dayanand Saraswati. I think that he has rendered great service to Hinduism. His bravery was unquestioned. But he made his Hinduism narrow. I have read *Satyartha Prakash*—the Arya Samaj Bible. Friends sent me three copies of it whilst I was resting in the Yeravada Jail. I have not read a more disappointing book from a reformer so great. He has claimed to stand for truth and nothing less. But he has unconsciously misrepresented Jainism, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism itself. One having even a cursory acquaintance with these faiths, could easily discover the errors into which the great reformer was betrayed. He has tried to make narrow one of the most tolerant and liberal of the faiths on the face of the earth. And an iconoclast though he was, he has succeeded in enthroning idolatry in the subtlest form. For, he has idolized the letter of the *Vedas* and tried to prove the existence in the *Vedas* of everything known to science. The Arya Samaj flourishes, in my humble opinion, not because of the inherent merit of the

teachings of *Satyartha Prakash*, but because of the grand and lofty character of the founder. Wherever you find Arya Samajists, there is life and energy. But having the narrow outlook and a pugnacious habit, they either quarrel with people of other denominations, or, failing them, with one another. Shraddhanandji has a fair share of that spirit. But, in spite of all these drawbacks, I do not regard him as past praying for. It is possible that this sketch of the Arya Samaj and the Swamiji will anger them.¹ Needless to say, I mean no offence. I love the Samajists, for I have many co-workers from among them. And I learnt to love the Swamiji, even while I was in South Africa. And though I know him better now, I love him no less. It is my love that has spoken.

The last among the Hindus, against whom I have been warned, are Jairamdas and Dr. Choithram. I swear by Jairamdas. Truer men I have not had the honour of meeting. His conduct in the jail was the envy of us all. He was true to a fault. He is not anti-Mussalman. Dr. Choithram, though I began to know him earlier, I do not know so well. But from what I do know of him, I decline to think of him as anything but a promoter of Hindu-Muslim unity. I have by no means exhausted the list. All I feel is, that if all these Hindus and Samajists have still to be won over to the side of unity, the word unity has no meaning for me, and I should despair of achieving unity in my life-time.

Bari Saheb

But the suspicion against these friends is not its worst part. I have been warned against Mussalmans, just as much as I have been warned against Hindus. Let me take only three names. Maulana Abdul Bari Saheb has been represented to me as an anti-Hindu fanatic. I have been shown some writings of his which I do not understand. I have not even worried him about them. For, he is a simple child of God. I have discovered no

¹ See *The Arya Samajists*—p. 135, and *Arya Samajists Again*—p. 138.

guile in him. He often speaks without thinking, and often embarrasses his best friends. But he is as quick to apologize as he is ready to say things offensive. He means all he says for the time being. He is as sincere in his anger as he is in his apology. He once flared up at Maulana Mahomed Ali without just cause. I was, then, his guest. He thought he had said something offensive to me also. Maulana Mahomed Ali and I were just then leaving his place to entrain for Cawnpore. After our departure, he felt he had wronged us. He had certainly wronged Maulana Mahomed Ali, not me. But he sent a deputation to us at Cawnpore asking us to forgive him. He rose in my estimation by this act. I admit, however, that the Maulana Sahib can become a dangerous friend. But my point is that he is a friend. He does not say one thing and mean another. There are no mental reservations with him. I would trust such a friend with my life, because I know that he will never stab me in the dark.

The Ali Brothers

A similar warning has been given to me about the Ali Brothers. Maulana Shaukat Ali is one of the bravest of men capable of immense sacrifice, and equally capable of loving the meanest of God's creatures. He is passionately fond of Islam, but he is no hater of other religions. Mahomed Ali is his brother's *alter ego*. I have not seen such implicit faithfulness to an elder brother as in Maulana Mahomed Ali. He has reasoned out for himself that there is no salvation for India without Hindu-Muslim unity. Their pan-Islamism is not anti-Hindu. Who shall quarrel with their intense desire to see Islam united against attack from without and purified from within? One passage in Maulana Mahomed Ali's Co-canada address was pointed out to me as highly objectionable. I drew his attention to it. He immediately acknowledged that it was an error. Friends have told me there is something to object to even in Maulana Shaukat Ali's address to the *Khilafat* Conference. I have the address by me, but I have not had time to study it. I know that if there is anything offensive in it, he is the man

readiest to make amends. The Brothers are not faultless. Being full of faults myself, I have not hesitated to seek and cherish their friendship. If they have some faults, they have many virtues. And I love them in spite of their faults. Just as I cannot forsake the Hindu friends I have mentioned above and effectively work among Hindus for Hindu-Muslim unity, neither can I work to that end among the Mussalmans without the Mussalman friends, such as I have mentioned. If so many of us were perfect beings, there would be no quarrels. Imperfect as we are, we have to discover points of contact, and with faith in God work away for the common end.

In order to purify the atmosphere of distrust of even the best of us, I had to deal with some of the principal characters. I may not have convinced the reader of the correctness of my estimate. Anyway, it was necessary that he knew mine even if his was different from it.

Illustration from Sind

This intense distrust makes it almost impossible to know the truth. I have received from Dr. Choithram the alleged facts of an attempted forcible conversion of a Hindu in Sind. The man is said to have been done to death by his Mussalman companions, because he will not accept Islam. The facts are ghastly if they are true. I straightway wired to Seth Haji Abdulla Haroon inquiring about the matter. He very kindly and promptly wired to say that it was reported to be a case of suicide, but that he was making further inquiries. I hope that we shall succeed in knowing the truth about it. I simply point out the difficulty of work in the midst of suspicion. There is one other Sind incident which I hesitate to report till I have fuller and more authentic particulars. I simply beseech those who hear about any such incidents, whether against Hindus or Mussalmans, to keep themselves cool and pass on simply facts which can be sustained. I promise on my part to inquire into the most trifling of cases and do whatever is possible for a single individual to do. Before long, I hope we shall have an army of workers whose one business will be to investigate all such

complaints, and do whatever is necessary to see that justice is satisfied and cases for future trouble are avoided.

From Bengal

The tales that are reported from Bengal of outrages upon Hindu women are the most disquieting, if they are even half-true. It is difficult to understand the causes of the eruption of such crimes at the present moment. It is equally difficult to speak with restraint of the cowardice of Hindu protectors of these outraged sisters. Nor is it easy to characterize the lust of those who become so mad with it as to take liberties with innocent women. It is up to the local Mussalmans and the leading Mussalmans in general of Bengal to find out the miscreants, not necessarily with a view to getting them punished, but with a view to preventing a recurrence of such crimes. It is easy enough to dig out a few criminals from their hiding places and hand them over to the police, but it does not protect society against the repetition of them. It is necessary to remove the causes by undertaking a thorough process of reform. There must arise in Islam, as well as in Hinduism, men who being comparatively pure in character would work among such men. Much the same may be said of the *Kabuli* terror. This has no bearing on the Hindu-Muslim tension. But we have to deal with such cases, too, if we are not to be helplessly relying purely upon the police.

Shuddhi and Tabligh

That, however, which is keeping up the tension is the manner in which the *Shuddhi* or conversion movement is being conducted. In my opinion, there is no such thing as proselytism in Hinduism as it is understood in Christianity or, to a lesser extent, in Islam. The Arya Samaj has, I think, copied the Christians in planning its propaganda. The modern method does not appeal to me. It has done more harm than good. Though regarded as a matter of the heart purely, and one between the Maker and oneself, it has degenerated into an appeal to the selfish instinct. The Arya Samaj preacher is never

so happy as when he is reviling other religions. My Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God, but all are imperfect because they have come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality. The real *Shuddhi* movement should consist in each one trying to arrive at perfection in his or her own faith. In such a plan, character would be the only test. What is the use of crossing from one compartment to another, if it does not mean a moral rise? What is the meaning of my trying to convert to the service of God (for, that must be the implication of *Shuddhi* or *Tabligh*) when those who are in my fold are every day denying God by their actions? 'Physician heal thyself'—is more true in matters religious than mundane. But these are my views. If the Arya Samajists think that they have a call from their conscience, they have a perfect right to conduct the movement. Such a burning call recognizes no time-limit, no checks of experience. If Hindu-Muslim unity is endangered because an Arya Samaj preacher or a Mussalman preacher preaches his faith in obedience to a call from within, that unity is only skin-deep. Why should we be ruffled by such movements? Only they must be genuine. If the Malkanas wanted to return to the Hindu fold, they had a perfect right to do so whenever they liked. But no propaganda can be allowed which reviles other religions. For, that would be negation of toleration. The best way of dealing with such propaganda is to publicly condemn it. Every movement attempts to put on the cloak of respectability. As soon as the public tear that cloak down, it dies for want of respectability. I am told that both Arya Samajists and Mussalmans virtually kidnap women and try to convert them. I have before me volumes of Aga-Khani literature which I have not yet had the time to study carefully, but I am assured that it is a distortion of Hinduism. I have seen enough of it to know that it describes H. H. the Aga Khan as a Hindu *avatar*¹. It would be interesting to learn what the

¹ This reference to the Aga-Khani Khojas offended them and five

Aga Khan himself thinks of all this literature. I have many Khoja friends. I commend this literature to their attention. A gentleman told me that some agents of the Aga-Khani movement lend money to poor illiterate Hindus, and then tell them that the debt would be wiped out if the debtor would accept Islam. I would regard this as conversion by unlawful inducements. But the worst form is that preached by a gentleman of Delhi. I have read his pamphlet from cover to cover. It gives detailed instructions to preachers how to carry on propaganda. It starts with a lofty proposition that Islam is merely preaching of the unity of God. This grand truth is to be preached, according to the writer, by every Mussalman irrespective of character. A secret department of spies is advocated whose one business is to be to pry into the privacy of non-Muslim households. Prostitutes, professional singers, mendicants, Government servants, lawyers, doctors, artisans are pressed into the service. If this kind of propaganda becomes popular, no Hindu household would be safe from the secret attention of disguised misinterpreters (I cannot call them missionaries) of the great message of the Prophet of Islam. I am told by respectable Hindus that this pamphlet is widely read in the Nizam's dominions, and that the methods advocated in it are extensively practised in the Nizam's dominions.

As a Hindu, I feel sorry that methods of such doubtful morality should have been seriously advocated by a gentleman who is a well-known Urdu author and has a large circle of readers. My Mussalman friends tell me that no respectable Mussalman approves of the methods

members of the community visited Mahatmaji whom he assured that if, as a result of his personal study of their literature, he found the charges levelled against them by his informants were untrue, he would apologize, but that "they must not take it ill, if I confirm the informants' opinion." He continued: "I have also told them that I cannot subscribe to the belief that H. H. the Aga Khan is an *avatar* in the Hindu sense. I have also told them that the use made by them of the mystic syllable *Om* and the form given to it by them is, in my opinion, taking liberty with things of the Hindu faith."

advocated. The point, however, is not what the respectable Mussalmans think. The point is whether a considerable number of Mussalman masses accept and follow them. A portion of the Punjab press is simply scurrilous. It is at times even filthy. I have gone through the torture of reading many extracts. These sheets are conducted by Arya Samajists or Hindu and Mussalman writers. Each vies with the other in using abusive language and reviling the religion of the opponent. These papers have, I understand, a fairly large circulation. They find place even in respectable reading rooms.

I have heard it said that the Government emissaries are at the back of this campaign of calumny. I hesitate to believe it. But even assuming the truth of it, the public of the Punjab should be able to cope with the growing disgrace.

I think I have now examined all the causes, both original and continuing, of the tension between the two communities. It is now time to examine the treatment of two constant causes of friction.

Cow-Slaughter

The first is cow-slaughter. Though I regard cow-protection as the central fact of Hinduism, central because it is common to classes as well as masses, I have never been able to understand the antipathy towards the Mussalmans on that score. We say nothing about the slaughter that daily takes place on behalf of Englishmen. Our anger becomes red-hot when a Mussalman slaughters a cow. All the riots that have taken place in the name of the cow have been an insane waste of effort. They have not saved a single cow, but they have, on the contrary, stiffened the backs of the Mussalmans and resulted in more slaughter. I am satisfied that during 1921 more cows were saved through the voluntary and generous effort of the Mussalmans than through the Hindu effort during all the previous twenty years (say). Cow-protection should commence with ourselves. In no part of the world, perhaps, are cattle worse treated than in

India. I have wept to see Hindu drivers goading their jaded oxen with the iron points of their cruel sticks. The half-starved condition of the majority of our cattle is a disgrace to us. The cows find their necks under the butcher's knife because Hindus sell them. The only effective and honourable way is to befriend the Mussalmans and leave it to their honour to save the cow. Cow-protection societies must turn their attention to the feeding of cattle, prevention of the cruelty, preservation of the fast disappearing pasture land, improving the breed of cattle, buying from poor shepherds and turning *panjra-poles* into model self-supporting dairies. Hindus do sin against God and man when they omit to do any of the things I have described above. They commit no sin, if they cannot prevent cow-slaughter at the hands of Mussalmans, and they do sin grievously when in order to save the cow, they quarrel with the Mussalmans.

Music

The question of music before mosques and now even *arati* in Hindu temples, has occupied my prayerful attention. This is a sore point with the Mussalmans as cow-slaughter is with the Hindus. And just as Hindus cannot compel Mussalmans to refrain from killing cows, so can Mussalmans not compel Hindus to stop music or *arati* at the point of the sword. They must trust to the good sense of the Hindus. As a Hindu, I would certainly advise Hindus, without any bargaining spirit, to consult the sentiment of their Mussalman neighbour, and wherever they can, accommodate him. I have heard that in some places, Hindus purposely and with the deliberate intention of irritating Mussalmans, perform *arati* just when the Mussalman prayers commence. This is an insensate and unfriendly act. Friendship pre-supposes the utmost attention to the feelings of a friend. It never requires consideration. But Mussalmans should never expect to stop Hindu music by force. To yield to the threat or actual use of violence is a surrender of one's self-respect and religious conviction. But a person, who never will yield to threat, would always minimize and,

if possible, even avoid occasions for causing irritation.

Pact

In view of what I have said above, it is clear that we have not even arrived at the stage when a pact is even a possibility. There can be, it is clear to me, no question of bargain about cow-slaughter and music. On either side it must be a voluntary effort and, therefore, can never be the basis of a pact.

For political matters, a pact or an undertaking is certainly necessary. But, in my opinion, the restoration of friendly feeling is a condition precedent to any effectual pact. Are both parties sincerely willing to accept the proposition that no disputes, religious or otherwise, between the communities should ever be decided by an appeal to force, *i.e.*, violence? I am convinced that the masses do not want to fight, if the leaders do not. If, therefore, the leaders agree that mutual rows should be, as in all advanced countries, erased out of our public life as being barbarous and irreligious, I have no doubt that the masses will quickly follow them.

So far as the political matters are concerned, as a non-co-operator, I am quite uninterested in them; but for the future understanding I hold that it is up to the Hindus as the major party not to bargain but leave the pen in the hands of, say, Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and abide by his decision. I would similarly deal with the Sikhs, the Christians and the Parsis and be satisfied with the residue. It is, in my opinion, the only just, equitable, honourable and dignified solution. Hindus, if they want unity among different races, must have the courage to trust the minorities. Any other adjustment must leave a nasty taste in the mouth. Surely, the millions do not want to become legislators and municipal councillors. And if we have understood the proper use of *satyagraha*, we should know that it can be, and should be, used against an unjust administrator whether he be a Hindu, Mussalman or of any other race or denomination; whereas a just administrator or representative is always and equally good, whether he be a Hindu or Mussalman. We want to do

away with the communal spirit. The majority must, therefore, make the beginning and thus inspire the minorities with confidence in their *bona fides*. Adjustment is possible only when the more powerful take the initiative without waiting for response from the weaker.

So far as employment in the Government departments is concerned, I think it will be fatal to good government if we introduce there the communal spirit. For administration to be efficient, it must always be in the hands of the fittest. There should be certainly no favouritism. But if we want five engineers we must not take one from each community, but we must take the fittest five even if they were all Mussalmans or all Parsis. The lowest posts must, if need be, be filled by examination by an impartial board, consisting of men belonging to different communities. But distribution of posts should never be according to the proportion of the numbers of each community. The educationally backward communities will have a right to receive favoured treatment in the matter of education at the hands of the national government. This can be secured in an effective manner. But those who aspire to occupy responsible posts in the government of the country, can only do so if they pass the required test.

Trust Begets Trust

For me the only question for immediate solution before the country is the Hindu-Mussalman question. I agree with Mr. Jinnah that Hindu-Muslim unity means *Swaraj*. I see no way of achieving anything in this afflicted country without a lasting heart-unity between Hindus and Mussalmans of India. I believe in the immediate possibility of achieving it, because it is so natural, so necessary for both, and because I believe in human nature. Mussalmans may have much to answer for. I have come in closest touch with even what may be considered a "bad lot." I cannot recall a single occasion when I had to regret it. The Mussalmans are brave, they are generous and trusting, the moment their suspicion is disarmed. Hindus, living as they do in glass houses, have no

right to throw stones at their Mussalman neighbours. See what we have done, are still doing, to the suppressed classes ! If *Kaffir* is a term of opprobrium, how much more so is *Chandal* ? In the history of the world religions, there is perhaps nothing like our treatment of the suppressed classes. The pity of it is that the treatment still continues. What a fight in Vaikom for a most elementary human right ! God does not punish directly. His ways are inscrutable. Who knows that all our woes are not due to that one black sin ? The history of Islam, if it betrays aberrations from the moral height, has many a brilliant page. In its glorious days it was not intolerant. It commanded the admiration of the world. When the West was sunk in darkness, a bright star rose in the Eastern firmament and gave light and comfort to a groaning world. Islam is not a false religion. Let Hindus study it reverently and they will love it, even as I do. If it has become gross and fanatical here, let us admit that we have had no small share in making it so. If Hindus set their house in order, I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam will respond in a manner worthy of its past liberal traditions. The key to the situation lies with the Hindus. We must shed timidity or cowardice. We must be brave enough to trust, and all will be well.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

“However good Hinduism or Islam may be in the abstract, the only way each can be judged is by the effect produced by each on its votaries considered as a whole.”

Let me summarize the long statement issued last week on this the greatest of all questions for the Indian patriot. The posterity will judge both the faiths by the manner in which the followers of each acquit themselves in the matter. However good Hinduism or Islam may be in the abstract, the only way each can be judged is by the effect produced by each on its votaries considered as a whole.

The following, then, is the summary of the statement :

Causes

1. The remote cause of the tension is the Moplah rebellion.
2. The attempt of Mr. Fazl-i-Hussain to re-arrange the distribution of posts in the education department, consistently with the number of Mussalmans in the Punjab, and consequent Hindu opposition.
3. The *Shuddhi* movement.
4. The most potent being tiredness of non-violence and the fear that the communities might, by a long course of training in non-violence, forget the law of retaliation and self-defence.
5. Mussalman cow-slaughter and Hindu music.
6. Hindu cowardice and consequent Hindu distrust of Mussalmans.
7. Mussalman bullying.
8. Mussalman distrust of Hindu fairplay.

Cure

1. The master-key to the solution is the replacement of the rule of the sword by that of arbitration.

Honest public opinion should make it impossible for aggrieved parties to take the law into their own hands, and every case must be referred to private arbitration or to law-courts if the parties do not believe in Non-co-operation.

2. Ignorant fear of cowardly non-violence, falsely so called, taking the place of violence should be dispelled.

3. Growing mutual distrust among the leaders must, if they believe in unity, give place to trust.

4. Hindus must cease to fear the Mussalman bully, and the Mussalmans should consider it beneath their dignity to bully their Hindu brothers.

5. Hindus must not imagine they can force Mussalmans to give up cow sacrifice. They must trust, by befriending Mussalmans, that the latter will, of their own accord, give up cow sacrifice out of regard for Hindu neighbours.

6. Nor must Mussalmans imagine they can force Hindus to stop music or *arati* before mosques. They must befriend the Hindus and trust them to pay heed to reasonable Mussalman sentiment.

7. Hindus must leave to the Mussalmans and the other minorities the question of representation on elected bodies, and gracefully and whole-heartedly give effect to the findings of such referee. If I had my way I should appoint Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan as the sole referee, leaving him free to consult Mussalmans, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis etc. as he considers best.

8. Employment under national government must be according to merit, to be decided by a board of examiners representing different communities.

9. *Shuddhi* or *Tabligh* as such cannot be disturbed, but either must be conducted honestly and by men of proved character. It should avoid all attack on other religions. There should be no secret propaganda and no offer of material rewards.

10. Public opinion should be so cultivated as to put under ban all the scurrilous writings, principally in a section of the Punjab press.

11. Nothing is possible without the Hindus shedding their timidity. Theirs is the largest stake and they must be prepared to sacrifice the most.

But how is the cure to be effected? Who will convince the Hindu maniac that the best way to save the cow is for him to do his duty by her, and not goad his Mussalman brother? Who will convince the Mussalman fanatic that it is not religion but irreligion to break the head

of his Hindu brother when he plays music in front of his mosque? Or, again, who will make the Hindu see that he will lose nothing by the minorities being even over-represented on the elective public secular bodies? These are fair questions and show the difficulty of working out the solution.

But, if the solution is the only true solution, all difficulties must be overcome. In reality, the difficulty is only apparent. If there are even a few Hindus and a few Mussalmans who have a living faith in the solution, the rest is easy. Indeed, even if there are a few Hindus only, or a few Mussalmans only with that faith, the solution would be still easy. They have but to work away single-heartedly and the others will follow them. And the conversion of only one party is enough, because the solution requires no bargains. For instance, Hindus should cease to worry Mussalmans about the cow without expecting any consideration from the latter. They should yield to the Mussalman demand, whatever it may be regarding representation, again without requiring any return. And if the Mussalmans insist on stopping Hindu music or *arati* by force, the Hindus will continue playing it, although every single Hindu should die at his post but without retaliation. The Mussalmans will, then, be shamed into doing the right thing in an incredibly short space of time. Mussalmans can do likewise, if they choose, and shame the Hindus into doing the right thing. One has to dare to believe.

But in practice it will not be thus; on the contrary, both will act simultaneously as soon as the workers become true to themselves. Unfortunately, they are not. They are mostly ruled by passion and prejudice. Each tries to hide the shortcomings of his co-religionists, and so the circle of distrust and suspicion ever widens.

It has been suggested to me that the Government are fomenting these dissensions. I should hope not. But assuming that they are, surely, it is up to us to neutralize such efforts by ourselves acting truly and faithfully.

A MUSSALMAN OUTBURST

“.....Mussalmans are not enjoined by the Quran to sacrifice a cow. They are said to be enjoined to sacrifice certain animals, including the cow, on stated occasions. The sacrifice of cow is not, therefore, obligatory.”

Here are some extracts from a Mussalman letter on the Hindu-Muslim statement :

“‘Am more ashamed of Hindu cowardice...Why did not the owners of the houses looted die in the attempt to defend their possessions etc.?’—These sentences are likely,” says the writer, “to excite the Hindus. I regret very much that you should have written such things...What your writing will do is dangerous to think.”

I fail to see anything dangerous in my writing. I should be glad, indeed, if my statement energizes the Hindus to *defend* themselves in the face of danger. We may not expect unity before we cease to fear one another. The writer has not suggested an alternative. What am I to say to a Hindu who lives in the fear of a neighbour if I am not to tell him that he should know how to die in the attempt to defend himself against his neighbour, either non-violently by simply standing at his post, or violently by returning blow for blow? This friend says again :

“No wise man, Hindu or Mussalman, will accept your judgment that Pandit Malaviyaji is ‘no enemy of Mussalmans.’ He is an open enemy, as open as day-light. I am sure even Hindus will not believe you in this. Lala Lajpat Rai stands in the category with Pandit Malaviyaji. Re. Jairamdas and Choithram, you are doing only injustice to yourself. Their conduct towards the Mussalmans is as clear as day-light to every reader of newspapers. Let me assure you that you will not advance the Hindu-Muslim problem by an inch by praising these Hindu leaders and condemning the Muslim leaders.”

The Hindu friends tell me that unity is impossible so long as I trust the Ali Brothers and Maulana Bari

Saheb. All these friends should know that if neither the present Hindu nor the present Mussalman leaders are to be trusted, unity can be achieved, if at all, only after their death. The friend proceeds :

“Why do you refer to the Aga-Khani literature and *Tabligh*? No harm, not a bit, is done by them to the national movement. They are carrying on their *Tabligh* in the most peaceful manner. You are referring to the worst form of Muslim’s preaching. What about the *Sbuddhi* movement? You have run a great risk by mentioning that the methods advocated in the pamphlet are extensively practised in the Nizam’s dominions. By this, you have unconsciously attacked a Muslim State...”

This writer’s is an attitude typical of a growing class of workers, namely, that we should not speak as we think but hush up everything. I can understand the necessity of not washing every rag of dirty linen in the open, but we cannot afford to slur over things that stare us in the face and of which everybody thinks. In the heat of his passion, the writer has forgotten to note that I have delivered no attack upon a Muslim State. I have said, ‘I am told’ that the questionable *Tabligh* referred in my statement is extensively practised in the Nizam’s dominions.

The writer says further:

“I cannot understand how cow-slaughter and music stand on the same platform. Mussalmans are enjoined by the Quran to sacrifice cows, whereas Hindus are not enjoined to play music before a mosque. Hindus have to stop their music before government hospitals and offices, but their obduracy does not allow them to do the same before a mosque.”

The writer should know that Mussalmans are not enjoined by the Quran to sacrifice a cow. They *are* said to be enjoined to sacrifice certain animals, including the cow, on stated occasions. The sacrifice of a cow is not, therefore, obligatory. But seeing that it is permissible, it becomes obligatory when a third party claims to force a Mussalman to refrain from cow-slaughter. Similarly, while there is no obligation upon a Hindu to play music before mosques, it does become an obligation immediately Mussalmans claim to stop Hindu music before mosques by force of arms. Both these things must, therefore, be left to voluntary adjustment.

WHAT MAY HINDUS DO ?

“The best and most lasting self-defence is self-purification. I refuse to be lifted off my feet because of the scares that haunt us to-day. If Hindus would but believe in themselves and work in accordance with their traditions, they will have no reason to fear bullying.”

Replying to Babu Bhagwan Das who took exception to such statements as that the Hindus were cowards and the Muslims bullies, and who suggested that the cause should be traced to the decadent Hindu leader's clinging to untouchability and so on, Gandhiji wrote as follows :

Regarding the first two questions the writer has answered them himself. In my opinion, they are only partly true. Though the majority of the Mussalmans of India and the Hindus belong to the same ‘stock,’ the religious environment has made them different. I believe and I have noticed, too, that thought transforms man's features as well as character. The Sikhs are the most recent illustration of the fact.

The Mussalman, being generally in a minority, has as a class developed into a bully. Moreover, being heir to fresh traditions, he exhibits the virility of a comparatively new system of life. Though, in my opinion, non-violence has a predominant place in the Quran, the thirteen hundred years of imperialistic expansion has made the Mussalmans fighters as a body. They are, therefore, aggressive. Bullying is the natural excrescence of an aggressive spirit.

The Hindu has an age-old civilization. He is essentially non-violent. His civilization has passed through the experiences that the two recent ones are still passing through. If Hinduism was ever imperialistic in the modern sense of the term, it has outlived its imperialism and has either deliberately or as a matter of course given it up. Predominance of the non-violent spirit has res-

tricted the use of arms to a small minority, which must always be subordinate to a civil power highly spiritual, learned and selfless. The Hindus, as a body, are, therefore, not equipped for fighting. But not having retained their spiritual training, they have forgotten the use of an effective substitute for arms, and not knowing their use nor having an aptitude for them, they have become docile to the point of timidity or cowardice. This vice is, therefore, a natural excrescence of gentleness.

Holding this view, I do not think that the Hindu exclusiveness, bad as it undoubtedly is, has much to do with the Hindu timidity. Hence also my disbelief in *akhdas* as a means of self-defence. I prize them for physical culture, but for self-defence I would restore the spiritual culture. The best and most lasting self-defence is self-purification. I refuse to be lifted off my feet because of the scares that haunt us to-day. If Hindus would but believe in themselves and work in accordance with their traditions, they will have no reason to fear bullying. The moment they recommence the real spiritual training, the Mussalman will respond. He cannot help it. If I can get together a band of young Hindus with faith in themselves and, therefore, faith in the Mussalmans, the band will become a shield for the weaker ones. They (the young Hindus) will teach how to die without killing. I know no other way. When our ancestors saw affliction surrounding them, they went in for *tapasya*, purification. They realized the helplessness of the flesh, and in their helplessness they prayed till they compelled the Maker to obey their call. 'Oh yes!' says my Hindu friend, 'but then God sent some one to wield arms.' I am not concerned with denying the truth of the retort. All I say to the friend is that as a Hindu he may not ignore the cause and secure the result. It will be time to fight, when we have done enough *tapasya*. Are we purified enough, I ask? Have we even done willing penance for the sin of untouchability, let alone the personal purity of individuals? Are our religious preceptors all that they should be? We are beating the air whilst we simply concentrate our attention upon picking holes in the Mussal-

man conduct. As with the Englishman, so with the Mussalman. If our professions are true, we should find it infinitely less difficult to conquer the Mussalman than the English. But Hindus whisper to me that they have hope of the Englishman, but none of the Mussalman. I say to them: 'If you have no hope of the Mussalman, your hope of the Englishman is fore-doomed to failure.'

The other questions can be briefly answered. The *goondas* came on the scene because the leaders wanted them. The leaders distrusted one another. Distrust never comes from well-defined causes. A variety of causes, more felt than realized, breeds distrust. We have not yet visualized the fact that our interests are identical. Each party seems vaguely to believe that it can displace the other by some kind of manœuvring. But I freely confess, as suggested by Babu Bhagwan Das, that our not knowing the kind of *Swaraj* we want has also a great deal to do with the distrust. I used not to think so, but he had almost converted me before I became Sir George Lloyd's guest at the Yeravada Central Prison. I am a confirmed convert.

The 'points of contact' referred to by me is a phrase intended to cover all social, religious and political relations, alike as between individuals and masses. Thus, for instance, instead of accentuating the differences in religion, I should set about discovering the good points common to both. I would bridge the social distance wherever I can do so consistently with my religious belief. I would go out of my way to seek common ground on the political field.

As for the referee, I have named Hakim Saheb's name undoubtedly for the universal respect that it carries with it. But I would not hesitate to put the pen even in the hands of a Mussalman who may be known for his prejudices and fanaticism. For as a Hindu, I should know that I have nothing to lose even if the referee gave the Mussalmans a majority of seats in every province. There is no principle at stake in giving or having seats in elective bodies. Moreover, experience has taught me to know that undivided responsibility immediately puts

a man on his mettle and his pride or god-fearingness sobers him.

Lastly, no proclamation that we should unite or any such thing will avail unless some of us began to act up to the proclamation, even though we may be the fewest possible.

THE ARYA SAMAJISTS

"I know the purifying work that the Arya Samaj has done. I know that it has laid its finger on many abuses that have soiled Hinduism. But no one can live on his capital. I want them to outlive the latter and extend the spirit of their reform."

A storm of indignation on the part of Arya Samajists is blowing against me. I have letters and telegrams of energetic protest against my references to the Samaj, its illustrious founder, Swami Shraddhanandji and the *Shuddhi* movement. They are from Ghaziabad, Multan, Delhi, Sukkur, Karachi, Jagraon, Secunderabad, Lahore, Sialkot, Allahabad, etc. I omit mention of individual letters. Probably, all of them expect me to publish their protests; some have specially insisted upon my doing so. They will forgive me for not complying with their desire. The majority are worded after the fashion of the telegram I reproduced last week. All resent what they regard as an attack upon the Arya Samaj, the *Satyartha Prakash*, Rishi Dayanand, Swami Shraddhanandji and the *Shuddhi* movement. I am sorry to have to say that my position still remains unaltered. I have read with careful attention the argumentative correspondence received by me.

Those who have attributed my statement to my ignorance have done so probably to leave me an open door for a safe retreat. Unfortunately for me, I have left no such chance for myself. I cannot plead ignorance of the *Satyartha Prakash* or the general teachings of the Arya Samaj. I cannot even say that I might have been prejudiced against the Arya Samaj. On the contrary, I approached it with the greatest veneration. I had, as I still have, profound regard for the personal character of Rishi Dayanand. His *brahmacharya* was an object of emulation for me. His fearlessness commanded my admiration. And my provincialism, if I have any in me,

was flattered by the fact of the Rishi being of the same little Kathiawad as myself. But I could not help myself. The conclusion I came to was in spite of myself, and I published it only when its publication became relevant. Its suppression would have been a cowardly omission on my part. Instead of becoming enraged against me for an honest expression of opinion, I appeal to them to take my criticism in good part, examine it, try to convince me and pray for me if I cannot be convinced. Two letters have challenged me to substantiate my conclusion. It is a fair challenge and I hope before long to produce from the *Satyartha Prakash* passages in its support. My friends will not engage me in a religious discussion with them. I shall content myself with giving them the grounds of my opinion. So far as Swami Shraddhanandji is concerned, there is no question of substantiating my opinion. My critics will oblige me by leaving him and me to ourselves. In spite of my opinion, I shall not quarrel with the Swamiji. Mine is the criticism of a friend. As for *Shuddhi*, the critics in their blind fury have forgotten the qualification 'as it is understood in Christianity or, to a lesser extent, in Islam.' This is quite different from saying that there is no proselytism in Hinduism. Hinduism has a way all its own of *Shuddhi*. But if the Arya Samajists differ from me, they may still allow me to retain my opinion. If they will re-read the statement, they will discover that I have said that they have a perfect right to carry on their movement if they like. Toleration is not a coinciding of views. There should be toleration of one another's views, though they may be as poles asunder. Lastly, I have not said that Arya Samajists or Mussalmans do kidnap women. I have said 'I am told.' By repeating what I was told, I have given both the parties an opportunity of repudiating the charge. Was it not better that I should publish what was being said, so that the atmosphere might be cleared?

Let me point out to my Arya Samaj friends that their protests betray want of toleration. Public men and public institutions cannot afford to be thin-skinned. They must stand criticism with good grace.

And now for an appeal to them. They have almost all entered their protests. I do not mind them. I assure them that I share their sorrow. It pained me when I wrote my criticism. It pains me now to know that it has hurt them. But I am not their enemy. I claim to be their friend. Time will prove my friendship. They do not want to quarrel with anybody or any faith. That is what almost all have said in their letters. Let them take to heart the tribute I have paid to the Samaj, its founder and to Swami Shraddhanand. I know the purifying work that the Arya Samaj has done. I know that it has laid its finger on many abuses that have soiled Hinduism. But no one can live on his capital. I want them to outlive the latter and extend the spirit of their reform. In spite of their denial, I repeat that their *Shuddhi* propaganda savours of the Christian propaganda. I would like them to rise higher. If they will insist upon reform from within, it will tax all their energy and take up all their time. Let them Hinduize the Hindu, if they believe with me that Arya Samaj is a part of Hinduism. If they consider it as distinct from Hinduism, I fear it will be a hard task for them to convert the Hindus. Let them ascertain where they stand. I have criticized because I want them to help the great national and religious movement that is now going on. The Samaj has a great future if it can outgrow what has appeared to me its narrowness. If the Samajists think there is no room for expansion, I shall feel sorry. I ask them in that case not to be irritated because I cannot see their liberalism. They should charitably overlook my blindness and patiently endeavour to remove it.

ARYA SAMAJISTS AGAIN

"I have always said that my politics are subservient to my religion. I have found myself in them, as I could not live my religious life *i.e.*, a life of service, without being affected by them. I should discard them to-day if they hindered it."

So many Arya Samajists have written such long dissertations on my (in their opinion) ignorance of Arya Samaj teachings and their excellence, that I was anxious to publish at least one of them so that the reader might have the Arya Samajist view of my comments. At last, I have a letter which it gives me pleasure to publish. It is from Principal Ramadeva of Kangri Gurukul. I have taken the liberty of removing only one passage which, in my opinion, must have been written in haste and does not do him justice. It does not affect his argument, and certainly takes nothing away from his passionate exaltation of the founder of the Samaj. Here is Principal Ramadeva's letter :

"I was deeply pained to read your article on Hindu-Muslim Unity in *Young India*. I have never in my life read an article so disappointing from the pen of one so great. The article has caused deep resentment and heart-burning in the Punjab and the U.P. Instead of easing the situation, it has inflamed the Hindu mind and led many thinking people among the Aryas to the conclusion that you are so much biased in favour of Islam and against the Arya Samaj that you cannot help rendering—though quite unconsciously—a grave injustice to the latter. Your attack upon the metaphysical beliefs of the Arya Samaj were quite irrelevant and had no bearing on the Hindu-Muslim question. They were not well reasoned out, and you are in no mood for a metaphysical discussion. The Arya Samajist's belief in the plenary inspiration of the *Vedas* has as little connection with Hindu-Muslim tension as your belief in metempsychosis has with the split in the Congress... Besides, if belief in verbal inspiration makes for narrowness, Islam is just as narrow as the religion of the *Vedas*. For, this belief formed an essential part of the Muslim creed even in the palmy days of the Mahomedan faith on which you dwell with

such fervent enthusiasm. Your implication that Maharshi Dayanand was the first sage to proclaim the doctrine of Vedic infallibility, is absolutely without any foundation in fact, and only reveals the dangers of dealing with subjects which a man—however great he may be—has not studied. May I respectfully point out that the *Upanishads*, the *Manu Smriti*, the six systems of philosophy, the *Puranas* and the works of Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, Chaitanya and other mediæval saints and scholars, all preach this doctrine? Again, the view that the *Vedas* contain the germs of all true knowledge including physical science is by no means new, all ancient scientists—like Arya Bhatta, Bhaskaracharya—held it. Besides, modern Vedic scholars like Pavgee, Paramashiva Iyer, Dwijdass Datta—none of whom is an Arya Samajist—have independently arrived at the same conclusion. I wonder if you know that Aravinda Ghosh has publicly declared that Swami Dayanand alone had discovered the right axioms of Vedic exegesis. The testimony of such eminent authorities—who devoted their life-time to the study of the *Vedas*—cannot be discredited by the mere *ipse dixit* of a Mahatma—however lofty his character and however great and over-flowing his love for his kind—who has not devoted even five consecutive years to the study of the *Vedas* and the *Vedangas* in the original. I am afraid you were ill-advised in venturing into the field of theological polemics, while writing as the supreme political leader of men of all faiths and creeds. Your characterization of the *Satyartha Prakash* is most unfair. It seems you have not read the first ten chapters which deal with prayer, *brahmacharya*, pedagogics, marriage reform, *sannyas*, politics, salvation, knowledge and nescience, *Vedas* and vegetarianism, and form the main book—these chapters do not, as a rule, touch upon other religions—and have only skipped over the four supplementary chapters. In fact, you had by means of the mysterious stirrings of your subliminal consciousness, arrived at the queer conclusion that Swami Dayanand was intolerant, long before you had glanced at the *Satyartha Prakash* and your hurried reading was vitiated by your preconceptions. You were in the position of a judge who pronounced his sentence after hearing the prosecution and then addressed himself to defence evidence in order to be able to write out a judgment in support of the sentence. Men who have read Dayanand's works carefully—your friend Andrews is one of them—or had the privilege of sitting at his feet—men like A. O. Hume, Revd. Scott, Sir Syed Ahmad, Ranade, Telang, Malabari, Raghunath Rao and Bishan Narayan Dhar—had never any difficulty in declaring that, whatever the merits or individual comments based upon data supplied to him, he was the most tolerant religious reformer of the age, and his love for his kind transcended the bounds of race, country, colour and even cultural unities. I must finish now. What I have written may sound presump-

tuous if solely regarded as the comments of a very small man upon the conduct of one justly regarded as the greatest man of the world. My only defence is that my reverence for you is equalled only by my love and devotion. Love and devotion have between themselves the miraculous power to raise the humble to the level of the mighty. With love and reverence.

Yours affectionately,
RAMA DEVA"

I have always said that my politics are subservient to my religion. I have found myself in them, as I could not live my religious life *i.e.*, a life of service, without being affected by them. I should discard them to-day if they hindered it. I cannot, therefore, subscribe to the doctrine that I may not, being a political leader, deal with matters religious. I have dealt with the Arya Samaj because I felt that it was losing its usefulness, and its present activity was doing harm to the country itself. As a friend and a Hindu, I claimed to speak pointedly to those who derived their belief from a common source. Had I been dealing with the relative merits of religions, I should certainly have given my views on Islam too.

I confess that I have no first-hand knowledge of the *Vedas*. But I know enough to be able to judge for myself. Principal Ramadeva is wrong in thinking that I was prejudiced against Maharshi Dayanand's teachings. I do not know the exact terms of the tribute paid to the great reformer by the great men whom Principal Ramadeva mentions. But probably I should have joined them in their tribute and still retained the opinion I hold. I do not love my wife the less because I know her limitations. My critics have made the mistake of thinking that because I have criticized the founder, I have no affection or regard for him. Let me also assure Principal Ramadeva that I have read all the chapters of *Satyartha Prakash*. Will he forget that a man's moral teaching may be of a high order and yet his vision may be narrow? I know that many of my friends, who believe me to be a highly moral man and my moral teaching of a high order, consider that my outlook upon life is narrow and

even fanatical. I do not take their criticism as an offence, though I consider myself to have a broad outlook upon life and also entitled to be classed among the most tolerant among mankind. I assure my Arya Samaj friends that I have only judged, if I have judged, as I should be judged by them. Let us, therefore, cry quits. Let them consider me to be the most intolerant and ignorant among their countrymen and leave me the liberty to retain the opinion I have expressed.

PARTIAL TO MUSSALMANS

“If we would be charitable and tolerant, we would endeavour to see our opponents as they see themselves. We shall never completely succeed in the endeavour, but it will give us the true perspective.”

The charge against me of partiality to Mussalmans is being renewed with redoubled vigour. My critics say in effect : ‘You exaggerate the Hindu blemishes and under-rate the Mussalman’s.’ I gladly subscribe to the charge in a way. If we are to give a correct judgment we should follow the excellent natural rule of seeing things in their proper perspective. Habit has made us reverse the natural process. We belittle our own faults and exaggerate the opponent’s. That develops the attitude of intolerance. If we would be charitable and tolerant, we would endeavour to see our opponents as they see themselves. We shall never completely succeed in the endeavour, but it will give us the true perspective. What, therefore, appear to be my exaggerations of Hindu blemishes are only seemingly so. ‘But,’ says a critic, ‘you do not want us to believe that Maulana Abdul Bari is such a simple child of God as you make him out to be. We in the U.P. find him to be vain, untruthful and unreliable.’ I can only assure them that if I had found the Maulana Saheb as they said he is, I would not have hesitated to say so. I have said the utmost I know against him when I say that he is a dangerous friend. I have not found him to be untruthful. The critics must not think, as some of them do, that I am flattering the Mussalmans for gaining a political end. Such a thing is impossible for me, because I know that unity cannot be achieved by flattery. Courteousness must not be mistaken for flattery, nor impudence for fearlessness.

A HOMILY

“Let us do unto others as we would that they should do unto

“You are already in a mood to flatter the Mahomedans and it seems as though you think by exonerating them from their high-handedness, you can keep them in close touch with the Hindus. You must now learn to distribute blame among the parties involved, as justice requires it, as this policy of seeking to blame the weak and meek members of the nation and flattering the strong and high-handed element is by no means a wise policy.”

This is but an extract from a long homily addressed to me by a Hindu friend. I know that many other Hindus think like this friend. The truth, however, is that in an atmosphere surcharged with suspicion and passion, my impartiality is bound to be mistaken for partiality. Those Hindus, who refuse to see anything good in Islam or Mussalmans, are naturally shocked to find any defence of Islam or its votaries. I remain unmoved and unperturbed. For, I know that some day my Hindu critics will admit the correctness of my estimate. They will, perhaps, admit that there will be no unity unless each party is prepared to understand, appreciate and make allowances for the other's view-point and even weaknesses. This requires a large heart otherwise called charity. Let us do unto others as we would that they should do unto us.

BAKR-ID

“God will hold each of us responsible for his own actions, not for his neighbour’s.”

This festival is at all times a time of anxiety for both Hindus and Mussalmans. It should not be, if we have toleration and respect for one another. Why should Hindus interfere with Mussalmans who believe in animal sacrifice and who, therefore, offer even cows in sacrifice? Similarly, why should Mussalmans sacrifice the cow or perform the sacrifice in a manner purposely to offend Hindu susceptibility? Why should not Mussalmans repeat the noble performance of 1921, when they, for the sake of respecting their Hindu neighbours’ sentiments, took it upon their heads to save the cow and actually succeeded in saving hundreds as Hindus themselves acknowledged. Surely, on that festival day Mussalmans should specially exert themselves to cultivate affectionate feelings towards Hindus, and the latter should respect the former’s rites and ceremonies even though they may be repugnant to them, the Hindus, just as they expect the Mussalmans to respect their idol-worship even though it is repugnant to their feelings. God will hold each one of us responsible for his own actions, not for his neighbour’s.

DELHI AND NAGPUR

“If Delhi and Nagpur are any indication of the temper of the people at large, we must say good-bye to Hindu-Muslim unity yet for a long while and must, therefore, be content to live as slaves rather than strive to be free.”

Delhi has disgraced itself. The riots in Delhi would show that there is no non-co-operation left there, for non-co-operation with the Government means co-operation among the people. But in Delhi, last week, there was more non-co-operation with one another than with the Government. The Congress and the *Khilafat* men could not produce peace among the people. It was reserved for the police and the military to do so. Theirs is the glory and ours the disgrace. The letters before me tell me that our volunteers being baffled in their attempt to bring about peace chose the next best thing, *viz.*, that of nursing those who were hurt not by the police, but in an affray among themselves.

The whole affair is said to have been due to an assault alleged to have been committed by some Hindus on a Mussalman youth. What though the youth had died? The aggrieved Mussalmans could have had their remedy either through the recently appointed arbitration board or through the Government courts.

Granted that some Hindus assaulted a Muslim boy, that thereupon some Mussalmans assaulted the Hindus, why did the other Hindus, whoever they might be, retaliate? For, according to the letters received by me, the fighting had spread to the whole of the Indian area. The same letters tell me that though it had so spread, the main population was unaffected by the disturbance and that there were instances of Hindus having sheltered Mussalmans and the latter having done likewise to Hindus. All this is no doubt creditable. But the fact

remains that the main population was powerless to restrain the mob. We have not yet gained control over the turbulent element.

Nagpur has fared no better. As yet only meagre details have come to hand. It is evident that the Hindus and the Mussalmans of Nagpur consider a free fight among themselves to be more profitable than a joint fight (non-violent though it must be) against the Government.

Thus, if Delhi and Nagpur are any indication of the temper of the people at large, we must say good-bye to Hindu-Muslim unity yet for a long while and must, therefore, be content to live as slaves rather than strive to be free.

But I do not despair. I believe with Maulana Shaukat Ali that these quarrels are a short-lived distemper and that both the communities are bound in the near future to settle down to a peaceful programme.

And, if we are to settle down to such a programme, I would like to suggest both to the Delhi and the Nagpur Congressmen and *Khilafatists* that neither party goes to court on any account whatsoever, but that the disputes be settled by arbitration. The lawyers, whether practising or otherwise, can help a great deal in this direction. They can simply refuse to take cases to court but point out to the parties that they have nothing to gain thereby and probably much to lose. They can assure them, too, that if it is real peace they want, they will not get it through courts.

A GLOOMY PICTURE

"If there are free fights between Hindus and Mussalmans daily in the Punjab, it must be a most difficult place to live in to-day. But I have no doubt that, at least outwardly, the Punjab is as peaceful as any other province in India."

A Mussalman correspondent writes thus feelingly from Amritsar :

"The free fights between Hindus and Mussalmans in Upper India, which have become almost a daily occurrence, indicate the complete inability of the two slave nations to find a solution of their domestic problems, more so their inability to assume responsibility of governing a vast country composed of many heterogeneous elements.

"Your efforts at bridging the gulf were no doubt successful, but the warring elements re-appeared soon after your incarceration. Where before your incarceration there existed fellow-feeling and sympathy between the two for their having been long neighbours, to-day there is disunion and discord. All the big towns of the Punjab are cockpits for both the nations, and there appears to be no prospect of the old relations ever being restored.

"Will you please think out a remedy before the disease becomes incurable? Please do come to the Punjab and see things for yourself. Your zest for *Khaddar* is useless unless and until you have restored the old conditions. Amritsar, which saw the glorious days of 1919, is to-day a picture of gloom. Out of nearly two hundred thousand people, hardly 50 would be found wearing *Khadi*, and even these do so because they must, holding as they do Congress offices. All this is due to the Hindu-Muslim tension. Remove the curse and everything will be all right. Alas, the foundation of *Sangathan* was laid at a most inauspicious moment."

There is no doubt that the picture given by the correspondent is exaggerated. If there are free fights between Hindus and Mussalmans daily in the Punjab, it must be a most difficult place to live in to-day. But I have no doubt that, at least outwardly, the Punjab is as peaceful

as any other province in India. Nor is the correspondent correct when he lays everything at the door of the *Sangathan*. It has no doubt aggravated the disease which was already there. Both the communities have lost their balance.

If the Punjabis have given up *Khaddar* because of the tension, their love of *Khaddar* or of the country could only be skin-deep. But as I do not think that they have less love of the country than the others, the cause of the decline of *Khaddar* must be sought elsewhere. The obvious cause lies in the want of faith in the necessity of *Khaddar* for *Swaraj*, and the desire for the soft life which the muslin and the calico denote. Of all the provinces, the Punjab is to-day able to carry out the boycott of foreign cloth, if it wishes. But it does not. I have heard it said that many Hindus decline to wear *Khaddar* because it is woven by the Mussalman weavers, and the Mussalmans refuse to wear it because they say they are not interested in *Swaraj*; they want to drive away the English but they want to revive the old Mussalman rule. And it is contended the old Mussalman rule cannot be revived, if the *Charlba* binds both Hindus and Mussalmans to a common ideal. These I regard as vapourings of heated brains. The poor Hindus and the poor Mussalmans have no time to think of the things mentioned above. They will gladly add a few rupees to their annual income which spinning does.

Apart, however, from the decline of the *Khaddar* and from the exaggerations of the correspondent, the seriousness of the tension cannot be denied. The break-down at Delhi of the authority of the leaders is too glaring to be slurred over.

Fortunately, there are already indications of reviving sanity. The Jats and the butchers are reported to have realized the folly of breaking one another's heads and to have made peace. But the most hopeful news comes from correspondents who tell me that if there were frenzied men bent on slaughter, there were also sane men and women bent on saving. These instances are not isolated but sufficiently numerous to show that love of

peace was at least as keen between the two communities as the love of war. The latter is not natural. It is like a carbuncle. But peace persists. The two sections have simply to make up their minds to respect each other's religious customs and the rest will be easy. So far as asking me to go to the Punjab is concerned, it is an open secret that I am pining to go there as well as the other places where tension exists. The spirit is willing, the flesh alone is weak. As soon I can undertake travels with any degree of safety, I propose in the company of Maulana Shaukat Ali to visit Sind and the Punjab.

NOT TWO RACES

"It is difficult to get out of the habit of using words which have passed current with a definite meaning."

The following will be read with interest :

"I have many times noted that you have referred to the Hindus and the Muslims as two 'races' in India. In my humble opinion, it is only less mischievous to speak of these two religious communities as 'races' than it is to call them two 'nations,' as a Mussalman correspondent of yours once did.¹ The fact is that about 90 per cent. of the Mussalman Indians (I would call them so, and not Indian Mussalmans, as they are wont to call themselves) are of the same 'race' or races as the Hindus,—having been descended from Indian ancestors who embraced Islam in India itself. As for the remaining 10 per cent. of the Mussalman Indians, though they may have some drops of Turki, Tatar, Arab, Pathan, Persian or Abyssinian blood in their veins, yet it is so much intermixed with native Indian blood by inter-marriage down through the generations, that those 10 per cent. may safely be designated as 99 per cent. native by race. In fact, the Hindus and Mussalmans in India no more represent two races than do the Protestants and Catholics in England. It is a question upon which history, ethnology and anthropometry can fairly accurately pronounce. But above all, whatever the racial constitution of their blood,—the fact cannot be denied that *all* of them (cent. per cent.) were born in India, are living in India, will die in India and be buried in India, like their fathers before them. And India is one country, and, therefore, they are all of one nation with Hindus. If only they were to regard themselves in Indian politics as Mussalman Indians, and not Indian Mussalmans !

"All the above applies *mutatis mutandis* also to Christian Indians, the third important religious community in India. (Perhaps no religious community in India or outside is of one race. Certainly, not the Hindus. Then, why speak of any community as a race?) Let our Christians, too, in their country's politics treat themselves as Christian Indians, even as their fellows in faith are doing in Egypt, Palestine, China, Japan and the Philippines."

¹ See *A Gloomy Picture*—p. 147.

The correspondent's position is historically accurate. It is difficult to get out of the habit of using words which have passed current with a definite meaning. Even "two communities" is open to the same objection. I can only promise to be careful in future. The watchful correspondent must not relax his effort to make the language of *Young India* accord with facts.

BOLSHEVISM OR DISCIPLINE ?

“The Hindu-Muslim alliance is intended to be a blessing to India and to the world, for, it is conceived in a spirit of peace and good-will to all If such an alliance proves a menace to the world, then there is no God or God is asleep.”

Two American friends have written to me a passionately-worded letter saying that in the name of religion I am probably introducing in India Bolshevism which knows no God or morality and is frankly atheistic. They say that the alliance between Mussalmans and myself is an unholy alliance and a menace to the world, for, they argue, Mussalmans are to-day aiming at supremacy in the East with the help of Bolshevic Russia. I have heard this charge hurled against me before now, but I have hitherto taken no notice of it. But it seems to me it is time for me to consider it when it is brought by responsible foreign friends in all good faith. In the first place, I must confess that I do not know the meaning of Bolshevism. I know that there are two opposite parties, one painting it in the blackest colours, the other hailing it as deliverance for the down-trodden masses all the world over. I do not know what to believe. All I can say is, that my movement is not atheistic. It is not a denial of God. It has been undertaken in His name and is being continued with constant prayer. It is undoubtedly a mass movement, but it seeks to touch the masses through their hearts, their better nature. It is a process of discipline and hence it is that it has filled even some of the best of my co-workers with despair.

I am proud of the alliance between the Mussalmans and myself. Islam is not a denial of God. It is a passionate avowal of one supreme deity. Not even its worst detractors have accused Islam of atheism. If, therefore, Bolshevism is atheism, there can be no com-

mon ground between it and Islam. They must in that case come to death-grip. It will be an embrace of opponents, not of friends. I have retained the American letter phraseology. But let me inform my American readers and others that I am under no delusion. My pretension is very humble. The alliance there is between the Ali Brothers and myself, *i.e.*, between a few valued Mussalman friends and myself. I would love to call it an alliance between Mussalmans and Hindus—not myself. But that seems to have been a day-dream. In truth, therefore, one may say, there is an alliance between some Mussalmans including the Ali brothers, and some Hindus including myself. How far it carries us, the future will show. There is no vagueness about the alliance. It is the most natural thing in the world. It is tragic that it excites wonder and even apprehension. What can be more natural than that Hindus and Mussalmans born and bred in India, having the same adversities, the same hopes, should be permanent friends, brothers born of the same Mother India? The surprise is that we should fight, not that we should unite. And why should the combination be a menace to the world? The greatest menace to the world to-day is the growing, exploiting, irresponsible Imperialism, which through the enslavement of India is threatening the independent existence and expansion of the weaker races of the world. That Imperialism is a negation of God. It does ungodly acts in the name of God. It covers its inhumanities, Dyerisms and O'Dwyerisms, under cover of humanity, justice and righteousness. And the pity of it is that the majority of Englishmen do not know that their name is being exploited. The great pity of it is that sober, god-fearing Englishmen are beguiled into the belief that all is well when all is ill with India, that all is well with the African races when they are being exploited and degraded in their name. If the defeat of Germany and the central powers ended the German peril, the victory of the Allies has brought into being a peril no less deadly for the peace of the world. I wish, therefore, that the so-called alliance between Mussalmans and Hindus will become a permanent reality,

based on a frank recognition of enlightened self-interest. It will, then, transmute the iron of sordid imperialism into the gold of humanitarianism. The Hindu-Muslim alliance is intended to be a blessing to India and to the world, for, it is conceived in a spirit of peace and goodwill to all. It has adopted non-violence and truth as the indispensable means for achieving *Swaraj* in India. Its symbol—the *Charkha*, the spinning-wheel—is a symbol of simplicity, self-reliance, self-control, voluntary co-operation among millions. If such an alliance proves a menace to the world, then there is no God or God is asleep.

‘HEART-UNITY’

“The same sun beats on the Himalayas as on the plains. Should the men of the plains quarrel with the men of the snows because of the different feel of the sun? Why should we make of books and formulas so many fetters to enslave us, rather than use them as aids to our deliverance and union of hearts?”

A correspondent writes :

“In your reply to the Bombay Municipal address you have used an expression—‘heart-unity.’ I pondered and meditated on it and saw that in the core of the Universe is the secret of heart-unity. One has to go down far into the fathomless depths, grasp and run away with the divine touch-stone, and touch with it the sundered and discoloured parts of human associations to bring back colour and happiness. It is in the inner being of both *Satya* and *Rita*, of Truth and Law of Nature. It is heart-unity that binds planet to planet and holds planets aloft in space, and it is heart-unity that keeps elemental matter bound each to the other. Chemists had discovered water as a compound of hydrogen and oxygen, but by bringing the two together they could not get water till an electric current passed through them. That electric current is the heart-unity in nature. It is heart-unity that transforms things—melts ice into water, and freezes water into ice; evolution and involution, the descent of spirit into matter and the return of matter to spirit are all the work of heart-unity.

“Parvati’s *tapasya* for heart-unity with Shiva is a wonderful piece of Hindu imagery. Parvati is God’s *Shakti* or the active principle in the Universe, incarnate in human form. I feel it was a direct vision from God to some *sadbak* ancestor of the race. The force of activity in the Almighty was revealed in its most beautiful aspect, in the place of matter, as Parvati engaged in *tapasya*—for what? for nothing less, *i.e.*, denser than heart-unity with the Heart of Hearts —प्राणस्य प्राणं, a lesson for humanity to consider and master. You have mastered it and applied it in the political field by heart-unity with the Alis and others, with the result that we are well on our way to get the compound of an Indian Nation, made out of several distinct elements of various races and creeds. May the country take the cue from you and be firm in her *tapasya* of activity in the direction of heart-unity.”

I print the letter not for the compliment it pays me, but for the 'heart-unity' the writer emphasizes and truly sees in my association with the Ali Brothers and others not of the same faith or even of the same mode of thought. "What is it," the Big Brother said to me last week, "that binds us so indissolubly together, though we are so dissimilar in most things? Is it not after all the allegiance to and the fear of the same God?" What he said was so natural and true. Why should we blaspheme God by fighting one another because we see Him through different media—the Quran, the Bible, the Talmud, the Avesta or the Gita? The same sun beats on the Himalayas as on the plains. Should the men of the plains quarrel with the men of the snows because of the different feel of the sun? Why should we make of books and formulas so many fetters to enslave us rather than use them as aids to our deliverance and union of hearts?

GULBARGA GONE MAD

“True Hindu-Muslim unity requires Mussalmans to tolerate, not as a virtue of necessity, not as a policy, but as part of their religion, the religion of others so long as they, the latter, believe it to be true. Even so is it expected of Hindus to extend the same tolerance as a matter of faith and religion to the religions of others, no matter how repugnant they may appear to their, the Hindus’, sense of religion.”

I hinted last week¹ that there was evidently an organization at the back of the mania for desecrating Hindu temples. Gulbarga is the latest instance in point. Whatever the Hindu provocation, if there was any, the Mussalman outburst has an ominous look about it. The desecration of temples cannot be justified in any circumstance whatsoever. Maulana Shaukat Ali, when he heard of Shambhar and Amethi desecrations, exclaimed in a fit of temper that the Mussalmans should not be surprised if the Hindus retaliate and some day find that their mosques have been desecrated. The Hindus may feel flattered or pleased over the Maulana’s indignant exclamation. But I do not, and I advise the Hindus not to be. Let them understand that I feel, perhaps more keenly than most of them, every fanatic outburst on the part of Mussalmans. I am fully aware of my responsibility in the matter. I know that many Hindus feel that I am responsible for many of these outbursts. For, they argue, I contributed the largest share to the awakening of the Mussalman masses. I appreciate the charge. Though I do not repent of my contribution, I feel the force of the objection. Therefore, if for no other reason, for this at least

¹ Under the heading *Wanton Desecration* Mahatma Gandhi referred to the desecration of two temples one at Moradabad and the other at Amethi in Lucknow, and stated: “There is no doubt that these cases have an organization at their back”, an organization which “cannot enhance the dignity of Islam” and “cannot popularize it.”

of greater responsibility, I must feel, more keenly than most Hindus can, these desecrations. I am both an idolater and an iconoclast in what I conceive to be the true senses of the terms. I value the spirit behind idol-worship. It plays a most important part in the uplift of the human race. And I would like to possess the ability to defend with my life the thousands of holy temples which sanctify this land of ours. My alliance with the Mussalmans presupposes their perfect tolerance for my idols and my temples. I am an iconoclast in the sense that I break down the subtle form of idolatry in the shape of fanaticism that refuses to see any virtue in any other form of worshipping the Deity save one's own. This form of idolatry is more deadly for being more fine and evasive than the tangible and gross form of worship that identifies the Deity with a little bit of a stone or a golden image.

True Hindu-Muslim unity requires Mussalmans to tolerate, not as a virtue of necessity, not as a policy, but as part of their religion, the religion of others so long as they, the latter, believe it to be true. Even so is it expected of Hindus to extend the same tolerance as a matter of faith and religion to the religions of others, no matter how repugnant they may appear to their, the Hindus', sense of religion. The Hindus must, therefore, reject the idea of retaliation. The law of retaliation we have been trying since the day of Adam, and we know from experience that it has hopelessly failed. We are groaning under its poisonous effect. Above all, the Hindus may not break mosques against temples. That way lies slavery and worse. Even though a thousand temples may be reduced to bits, I would not touch a single mosque, and expect thus to prove the superiority of my faith to the so-called faith of fanatics. I would love to hear of priests dying at their posts in defence of their temples and their idols. Let them learn to suffer and to die in the defence of their temples, even as God allows Himself to be insulted and broken up in the insult and damage done to the idols in which, being omnipresent, He undoubtedly resides. Hindus will not defend their religion or their temples by seeking to destroy mosques and thus

proving themselves as fanatical as the fanatics who have been desecrating temples.

To the unknown, who are undoubtedly behind these desecrations, I submit: "Remember that Islam is being judged by your conduct. I have not found a single Mussalman defending these outbursts, not even under provocation. There seems to me to have been little, if any, provocation offered by the Hindus. But let us assume that it was otherwise, that Hindus played music near mosques to exasperate Mussalmans, that they even removed a stone from a minaret, yet I venture to say that Mussalmans ought not to have desecrated Hindu temples. Even retaliation has its limits. Hindus prize their temples above their lives. It is possible to contemplate, with some degree of equanimity, injury to life but not to temples. Religion is more than life. Remember that his own religion is the truest to every man, even if it stands low in the scales of philosophic comparison. But presumption is against such Hindu provocation. The desecration in Multan was an unprovoked act. I have been trying to find proof for the allegations about Hindu desecration in the places referred to in my article on Hindu-Muslim tension. I have failed to receive any proof in support of them. You will not enhance the reputation of Islam by the acts reported about Amethi, Shambhar, and Gulbarga. If you will permit me to say so, I feel about the honour of Islam as much as I feel about my own religion. This I do because I desire to live in perfect, open and hearty friendship with Mussalmans. I cannot help saying that these desecrations are cutting a deep wound in my heart."

To the Hindus and Mussalmans of Delhi, I say: "Yours is a golden opportunity, if you desire amity between the two communities. In the light of what seems to have happened at Amethi, Shambhar, and Gulbarga, it is doubly your duty to solve the question. You have had the rare good fortune of having amongst you two Mussalmans, Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari, who have hitherto enjoyed the confidence of both the communities. You have, therefore, noble traditions behind you. You can turn your quarrels to good account

by closing the ranks and establishing a heart friendship that will not break under any strain whatsoever. I have placed my services at your disposal. If you will have me to act as a mediator between you, I am prepared to bury myself in Delhi and in collaboration with any others whom you may appoint, endeavour to find out the true facts. An authentic story of the events of July last and the circumstances that led to them is a necessary preliminary to a lasting solution. I ask you to come to a decision quickly. The Hindu-Muslim question is the question on a proper solution of which hangs the destiny of India in the immediate future. Delhi can solve the question, for the others are likely to follow what Delhi might do."

AN EXPLANATION

“The business of every well-wisher of the country is to condemn those parties who promote mischief and to leave no stone unturned to stop it.”

Some Mussalman friends of Delhi have been to me and expressed their surprise at my saying that there was a Mussalman organization at the back of the desecration of Hindu temples and that these desecrations were unprovoked. The friends tell me that my statement about organization has been interpreted to mean an organization on behalf of Mussalmans as a community, and that about provocation to mean provocation of any kind whatsoever. I told my visitors that by an organization I did not mean an organization formed or instigated by the Mussalman community, but an organization of some individuals. I had no data to say how many.

These friends told me, as Hakim Saheb and Maulana Mahomed Ali had told me on my arrival in Delhi, that they knew of no such organization and that, had there been any, they should know it. I told them that, whilst their repudiation shook my confidence in my statement, I was not prepared to dismiss from my mind the idea of an organization of the kind mentioned by me. So many informants, including Mussalmans, had told me about it before the recent desecrations. When they happened, I could not but come to the conclusion that they were not the chance work of frenzy, but that they took that particular shape by reason of organized instigation. I should be glad to find that I was totally mistaken, and as soon as I was convinced of my error of judgment, I should readily make the needed correction. It has been suggested that the organization might well be from a Government agency. I said I was not prepared to deny the Government's share in these disturbances. I should certainly

not be surprised to discover that the directing mind was Government agency.

As for provocation, the *Young India* writing,¹ I told my visitors, quite clearly showed that I had referred to provocation in kind. It says: "Presumption is against such provocation. The desecration in Multan was an unprovoked act. I have been trying to find proof for the allegations about Hindu desecration in the places referred to in my article on Hindu-Muslim tension, but I have failed to receive any proof in support of them."

My visitors produced before me a Hyderabad journal which is said to hold that there was such Hindu provocation. If it could be proved, whilst I would still hold, under every conceivable circumstance, desecration of temples and equally of mosques to be unjustified from my point of view, I admitted that my condemnation would lose much of its force. I should be deeply hurt and ashamed, if the alleged Hindu desecration in Gulbarga was found to be true.

My visitors next asked me whether there was not a counter-organization on the part of Hindus. I told them I knew of no Hindu organization instigating desecration of mosques, but I did see that there was an organization of some Hindus, not an inconsiderable number, who were bent on provoking, writing insultingly of Islam and grossly exaggerating Mussalman misdeeds. This was unpardonable. In this respect, however, both parties were equally to blame. The business of every welisher of the country was to condemn those parties who promoted mischief, and to leave no stone unturned to stop it. I told my visitors that, if I was permitted and assisted whole-heartedly by both the sections, I was prepared, singly if necessary, and assisted if possible, by my colleagues, to conduct an inquiry and find out who started the mischief, how it spread and how it could be remedied.

¹ See *Gulbarga Gone Mad*—p. 157.

A REMEDY?

"I want the Hindus to be physically strong. I want them to fear no man. These are necessary not merely for Hindu-Muslim unity, but even for national existence apart from unity. But I know that possession of mere physical strength will not bring about unity."

A correspondent suggests a solution of the Hindu-Muslim question in the course of a letter, from which I take the following :

"The Mahomedans will respect the Hindus when the former find that the latter are equal to them in strength of body, and then and then only will union be possible. You will, therefore, concentrate all your energies, on the uplifting of the Hindu race in body. Let the Hindus set up *akhdas* in every village and town for exercise and let them eat nourishing food. You should preach to them not to spend much on the marriage of their sons and daughters, but keep *brahmacharya* up to the age of say 21. You will, thus, be doing a great service to the Hindu race and the attainment of *Swaraj* will follow as a matter of course. Please publish this letter in *Young India*."

The correspondent will level down both Hindus and Mussalmans to the position of brutes, continually measuring brute strength for the purpose of existence. Only he forgets that between brutes there is no love lost. I want the Hindus to be physically strong. I want them to fear no man. These are necessary not merely for Hindu-Muslim unity, but even for national existence apart from unity. But I know that possession of mere physical strength will not bring about unity. We should still be fighting like 'cats and dogs' so long as we have no love in us for one another. I for one do not consider it worth while to devote my life to procuring an armed neutrality. I want lasting peace that springs from toleration of each other's religion. It is the old story; whether as between ourselves and English or between Hindus and Mussal-

mans, we want change of heart. Everything else will follow as a matter of course.

The correspondent prescribes *brahmacharya* for developing physical strength. It is a base use to make of a priceless possession to think of self-restraint for acquiring physical prowess. Do Tommies observe self-restraint for becoming Sandows? Let the correspondent quietly work out the implications of his prescription. I wish we had an army of 10,000 real *brahmacharis*. We should, then, conquer Mussalmans, Englishmen and everybody. Does not the correspondent realize that his *brahmacharis* will not fight as he suggests? It is true that they will not need to do so either.

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

"The way to get rid of the Hindu cowardice is for the educated portion to fight the *goondas*. We may use sticks and other clean weapons. My *ahimsa* will allow the use of them. We shall be killed in the fight. But that will chasten both the Hindus and the Mussalmans. That would remove the Hindu cowardice in a moment."

As I am reaching Delhi, I read the following letter which I give almost word for word, save for two or three slight grammatical corrections :

"The Mussalmans of Nagpur have run amuck. Though a Hindu, I have hitherto studiously refrained from taking any part in the Hindu agitation at Nagpur. I am a believer both in non-violence and Hindu-Muslim unity. Believe me, there is no sectarian spirit in me. But the doings of the Mussalmans in Nagpur, as in many other places, are putting my faith to a very severe test, indeed. The pity of it is that not a single responsible Mussalman of Nagpur has publicly condemned these acts. Had it not been for the brave Doctor Moonje and the gallant Udaram followed by the 'Koshthis', there is no knowing what atrocities the Mussalmans would have committed. I know there is no bargaining in love. I also agree that in love it is all giving. But I cannot forget that the sacrifice and sufferings undergone for the sake of love are voluntary and not forced. But the Hindu yields, not out of his strength, not of his own free will, but out of his weakness and in spite of himself. To my mind, the Hindus are only trying to shake off the slavery of the British to become serfs of the Mussalmans. Your pathetic article *Gulbarga Gone Mad* is an index of the depth of your own feelings in this matter.

"But you have yourself several times declared that you would prefer violence to cowardice. You also wrote in the *Young India*, some weeks ago, that the average Mussalman was a bully, and that the average Hindu was a coward. Alas! this is only too true! How else could the Mussalmans of Nagpur, who are in a minority, rise so often in the teeth of the overwhelming number of the Hindus? The fact of the case is that the docile Hindu commands neither respect nor fear. Whether or not Darwin was right, is not my part to determine. But one thing is clear. The

world has no place for the weak. They must become strong or cease to be. If the Hindus want to live, they must organize, they must get strong, they must agitate, and they must learn the divine art of dying for the honour of their women and their gods.

"But they are hopeless cowards. For them, non-violence has no meaning. It only serves as a mask to cover their abject cowardice. To preach to them non-violence sounds very much like preaching a sermon on moderation in diet to the famine-stricken before providing them with the means of satisfying their hunger, or is like feeding a sick and infirm man with food that even strong men find difficult to digest. Far from doing him the least good, it does him incalculable harm.

"If you follow this line of thought, will you not feel constrained to concede that for a real and lasting Hindu-Muslim unity, the Hindus must develop the spirit of manliness? Must they not learn to vindicate the honour of their women and their temples? The weak are the greatest enemies of society. They corrupt both themselves and the strong, the latter by tempting them to bully. Weakness curseth both him that is weak and him that bullies him. The Hindus may not retaliate in the sense of taking 'a tooth for a tooth,' and 'an eye for an eye.' They may not avenge themselves by violating the sanctity of Mussalman womanhood or by defiling or demolishing mosques. But since non-violence is beyond them, should you not advise them to learn to teach the wrong-doers a salutary lesson? Must they not develop the ability to defend themselves violently, before they could be expected to appreciate non-violence? Do not the good of the Hindus, real Hindu-Muslim friendship, and, for that matter, *Swaraj*, lie that way?

"These thoughts have been agitating my mind now for a pretty long time. I tried to reason with myself, but I could not find a satisfactory answer to the questions named above. Hence, I turn to you for guidance. I hope you will excuse me for encroaching upon your time with such a long letter. I shall be earnestly awaiting your reply to this in the columns of the *Young India* at your earliest convenience.

"I would like to have my identity, though not my letter, kept private."

The earnestness of the writer is written in every part of the letter. The reasoning is sound so far as it goes. My difficulty, however, arises when we come to working out in practice the writer's propositions and their corollaries. The reader will find an outline of my scheme of work in the translation given elsewhere,¹ and

¹ See *Hindu-Muslim Unity*, p. 170.

made for me by Mahadev Desai, of an article I wrote in *Navajivan* last week to meet a difficulty that has arisen in Gujarat and in answer to questions put both by Hindu and Mussalman friends.

Mine is, at the present moment, a most pitiable position. Thousands, it may be said in truth, look to me for guidance at this time of trial for the nation. I have taken a leading part in the *Khilafat* agitation. I have unhesitatingly and fearlessly propounded the doctrine of giving without the stipulation of receiving anything in return. There is no flaw in my reasoning. But the correspondent's question is: 'Is my reasoning relevant to the situation? Have Hindus anything to give? One can give without taking only out of the fulness of possession.'

Let us see.

It is common cause between the correspondent and myself that the average Hindu is a coward. How is he to be turned into a brave man? Is he to become brave by muscular development or by developing the bravery of the soul? My correspondent says: 'The world has no place for the weak.' He means, I imagine, 'physically weak!' If so, the proposition is unsound. There are many animals physically stronger than man, and yet man lives. Many muscular races have died out and some of them are even now in the process of dying out. The proposition should, therefore, be, so far as man is concerned: 'The world has no place for the weak in spirit.'

The die is cast for me. The common factor of all religions is non-violence. Some inculcate more of it than others, all agree that you can never have too much of it. We must be sure, however, that it is non-violence and not a cloak for cowardice.

Now, in order to arrive at a solution we must not think of the man in the street. We must think of ourselves who are behind the man in the street and pulling the strings. Let us take care that *we* do nothing out of fear. I hate duelling, but it has a romantic side to it. I am engaged in bringing that side of it to the fore. I

would love to engage in a duel with the Big Brother.¹ When we are both satisfied that there is no chance of unity without bloodshed, and that even we two cannot agree to live in peace, I must then invite the Big Brother to a duel with me. I know that he can twist me round his thick fingers and dash me to pieces. That day Hinduism will be free. Or, if he lets me kill him in spite of the strength of a giant, Islam in India will be free. He will have atoned for all the bullying by the average Mussalman. What I detest is the match between *goondas* of both the parties. Any peace based upon such a trial of strength will turn to bitterness in the end. The way to get rid of the Hindu cowardice is for the educated portion to fight the *goondas*. We may use sticks and other clean weapons. My *ahimsa* will allow the use of them. We shall be killed in the fight. But that will chasten both the Hindus and the Mussalmans. That would remove the Hindu cowardice in a moment. As things are going, each party will be the slaves of their own *goondas*. That means dominance of the military power. England fought for the predominance of the civil power and won and lived. Lord Curzon did much harm to us. But he was certainly brave and right when he stood out for the predominance of civil authority. When Rome passed into the hands of the soldiery, it fell. My whole soul rises against the very idea of the custody of my religion passing into the hands of *goondas*. Confining myself, therefore, for the present to the Hindus, I must respectfully but earnestly warn the thinking Hindus against relying upon the assistance of *goondas* for the protection of their temples, themselves and their wives and children. With the weak bodies they have, they must be determined to stand at their post and to die fighting or without fighting. It would have been a glorious death for Jamnalalji and his colleagues, if they had died in the act of securing peace. It will be a glorious death for Dr. Moonje or me, when we defend temples single-handed. That were bravery of the spirit, indeed.

¹ Maulana Shaukat Ali.

But there are many less heroic things to do. We must find out the true facts about Nagpur. I am in correspondence with Dr. Moonje about it. I am wooing the Hindus and Mussalmans of Delhi to let me know the root causes of the trouble there. I have offered to arbitrate singly or in company. They have not yet repelled my advances. There is no authentic story of the unfortunate trouble. I must refuse to lose my head. I am not satisfied that the Mussalmans alone are to blame for everything in every place. I do not know what was the first cause. I do know that an unscrupulous press on either side is to-day poisoning the minds of the simple Hindus and the simple Mussalmans. I do know also that more poison is being spread in private conversations, and incidents are exaggerated beyond all recognition. I am going to leave no stone unturned to reach the bottom of this sea of darkness, doubt and despair. A true statement of facts to date is the preliminary indispensable to a correct solution of the tension that threatens to paralyze all healthy public activity. My intense desire to reach a solution of the trouble is not the least among the causes that have impelled me to a complete surrender to the Swarajists and all concerned.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

“Running away for fear of death, leaving one’s dear ones, temples or music to take care of themselves, is irreligion; it is cowardice. It is not manly, it is unmanly. Non-violence is the virtue of the manly. The coward is innocent of it.”

The following is the important article by Gandhiji on the Hindu-Muslim tension referred to in the preceding article :

I had occasion whilst addressing a public meeting at Surat to refer to the question of Hindu-Muslim unity in detail, as some friends there wanted to know my views about *Sangathan*. After the meeting I had a letter from a Mussalman friend, offering suggestions for the solution of the question. I now see that even Gujarat is not quite free from the dangers of communal disturbances. The Visanagar affair can hardly be said to be yet settled. There is some trouble in Mandal. There was fear of a little disturbance in Ahmedabad. Some trouble is apprehended in Umreth. Other parts (e.g., Bhagalpur in Bihar) are also in the same plight.

The question of Hindu-Muslim unity is getting more and more serious every day. One thing should be made clear at the outset. In the case of many of these disturbances, we hear of Government agents being at the back of them. The allegation, if true, would be painful to me, not surprising. It should not be surprising if the Government fomented the troubles, it being their policy to divide us. It would be painful, because of the necessary implication, that neither of the communities realizes wherein lies its interests. Only those can be set by the ears by a third party, who are in the habit of quarrelling. Government has never been heard of having fomented a quarrel, say, between the Brahmans and Banias, nor amongst the Sunni Mussalmans. The suspicion or fear of their having set the Hindus and Mussalmans by

the ears is always entertained, because both have quarrelled so often. It is this habit of quarrelling that needs to be abandoned if we want to have *Swaraj* and retain it.

Quarrels must break out so long as the Hindus continue to be seized with fear. Bullies are always to be found where there are cowards. The Hindus must understand that no one can afford them protection, if they go on hugging fear. Fear of man argues want of faith in God. Only he trusts to his physical strength who has no faith or very little faith in God's omnipresence. The Hindu must cultivate either of these two—faith in God or faith in one's physical might. If he does neither, it will spell the ruin of the community.

The first *viz.*, reliance on God and shaking off the fear of man, is the way of non-violence and the best way. The second *viz.*, reliance on one's physical might, is the way of violence. Both have a place in the world. It is open to us to choose either. One man cannot try both at the same time. If all the Hindus and Mussalmans both elect the way of violence, we had better cease to talk of winning *Swaraj* in the immediate future. Armed peace means not a little fighting that will end with the breaking of a few heads or of a dozen temples. It must mean prolonged fighting and rivers of blood. I am against *Sangathan*, and I am not. If *Sangathan* means opening *akbadas* and organizing the Hindu hooligans through them, I would regard it as a pitiable condition. You cannot defend yourself and your religion with the help of hooligans. It is substituting one peril for another, and even adding another. I would have nothing to say against *akbadas* if they were used by the Brahmans, Banias and others for the development of their physique. *Akbadas* as *akbadas* are unexceptionable. But I have no doubt that they are no good for giving a training to fight the Mussalmans. It will take years to acquire the physical strength to fight.

The *akbada* is, therefore, not the way. We will have to go in for *tapasya*, for self-purification, if we want to win the hearts of Mussalmans. We shall have to cast off all the evil in us. If they attack us, we shall have to

learn not to return blow for blow, but bravely to face death—not to die a craven death leaving wife and children behind, but to receive their blows and meet death cheerfully.

I would tender the same advice to the Mussalmans. But it is unnecessary, as the average Mussalman has been assumed to be a bully. The general impression is that the Mussalmans can fight and fight well. I do not, therefore, need to tell them how they should defend themselves from the attacks of the Hindus; on the contrary, I have to appeal to them to forbear. I have to appeal to them to get the *goonda* element under control and to behave peaceably. The Mussalmans may regard the Hindus as a menace in other matters. They do regard them as an economic menace. They do dread the Hindus' interference with their religious rites on the Bakr-Id day. But they are in no fear of being beaten by the Hindus. I will, therefore, tell them only this: 'You cannot protect Islam with the *lathi* or the sword. The age of the *lathi* is gone. A religion will be tested by the purity of its adherents. If you leave it to the *goondas* to defend your youth, you will do serious harm to Islam. Islam will, in that case, no longer remain the faith of the *fakirs* and worshippers of Allah.'

I have up to now confined myself to giving general advice. Maulana Hasrat Mohani told me that the Mussalmans ought to protect the cow for the sake of the Hindus, and Hindus should cease to regard the Mussalmans as untouchables, as he said they are regarded in North India. I told him: 'I will not bargain with you in this matter. If the Mussalmans think it their duty to protect the cow for the sake of the Hindus, they may do so irrespective of how the Hindus behave towards them. I think it a sin for a Hindu to look upon a Mussalman as an untouchable, and the Hindu ought not to do so, irrespective of a Mussalman killing or sparing the cow.'

The Mussalman ought to be no more untouchable to a Hindu than a Hindu of any of the four castes is to one of the other. I regard these things as axiomatic. If Hinduism teaches hatred of Islam or of non-Hindus, it

is doomed to destruction. Each community should, then, put its house in order without bargaining with the other. To nurse enmity against the Mussalman, for the sake of saving the cow, is a sure way to kill the cow and doubly sinful. Hinduism will not be destroyed by a non-Hindu killing a cow. The Hindus' religion consists in saving the cow, but it can never be his religion to save the cow by a resort to force towards a non-Hindu. The Hindus want *Swaraj* in India, and not a Hindu *Raj*. Even if there was a Hindu *Raj*, and toleration one of its features, there would be place in it for Mussalmans as well as Christians; it would redound to the credit of Hinduism, if stopping of cow-slaughter was brought about not by force, but as a deliberate voluntary act of self-denial on the part of Mussalmans and others. I would, therefore, deem it unpatriotic even to nurse a dream of Hindu *Raj*.

Then, there is the trouble about music. It is fast growing every day. A letter I had in Surat says that, as it is not obligatory on a Hindu to play music, he should stop it before mosques to spare the feelings of the Mussalmans. I wish the question was as simple as the correspondent thinks. But it is the opposite of simple. Not a single Hindu religious ceremony can be performed without the accompaniment of music. Some ceremonies require the accompaniment of continuous music. No doubt, even here due regard ought to be had for the feelings of the Mussalmans. The music may in such cases be less noisy. But all this can be and ought to be done on the basis of 'give and take.' Having talked with a number of Mussalmans in the matter, I know that Islam does not make it obligatory for a Mussalman to prevent a non-Mussalman from playing music near mosques. Nor is such a thing on the part of a non-Mussalman calculated to injure Islam. Music should never, therefore, be a bone of contention.

In many places, however, the Mussalmans have forcibly sought to stop Hindus from playing music. This is clearly intolerable. What is readily yielded to courtesy is never yielded to force. Submission to a courteous request is religion, submission to force is irreligion. If

the Hindus stop music for fear of a beating from the Mussalmans, they cease to be Hindus. The general rule in this respect may be said to be this, that where the Hindus have long been deliberately observing the custom to stop music before mosques, they must not break it. But where they have been playing music without interference, the practice should continue. Where trouble is apprehended and facts are disputed, both communities ought to refer the matter to arbitration.

Where a court of law has prohibited music, the Hindus should not take the law in their own hands. And the Mussalmans should not insist on stopping music by force.

Where the Mussalmans refuse to yield, or where the Hindus apprehend violence, and where there is no prohibition by a court of law, the Hindus must take out their processions with music accompanying, and put up with all the beating inflicted on them. All those who join such processions, or who form the musical band, must thus sacrifice themselves. They will thereby defend their faith and their self-respect.

Where the Hindus are unequal to this soul-force, it is open to them to resort to force in self-defence. Where death without resistance is the only way, neither party should think of resorting to law courts or help from Government. Even if one of the parties resort to such aid, the other should refrain. If resort to law courts cannot be avoided, there ought to be at least no resort to false evidence.

It is the rule of honourable combat that, after having heartily given and taken blows, both the parties quiet down, and seek no reinforcement from outside. There should be no bitterness or feeling of revenge behind.

A quarrel should in no case be carried from one street to another. The fair sex, the aged and the infirm, children and all non-combatants ought to be free from molestation. Fighting would be regarded as sportsman-like if these rules are observed.

I hope that the Hindus and Mussalmans in Gujarat will keep their heads cool and keep the peace. I hope

also that the fear of a possible trouble in Umreth is unjustified. Let both the communities there hold mutual consultations and settle their differences amicably.

Running away for fear of death, leaving one's dear ones, temples or music to take care of themselves, is irreligion, it is cowardice. It is not manly, it is unmanly. Non-violence is the virtue of the manly. The coward is innocent of it.

It will take some time before the average Hindu ceases to be a coward and the average Mussalman ceases to be a bully. In the meantime, the thinking section of both the communities should try their best, on all occasions of trouble, to refer matters to arbitration. Their position is delicate, but they should expend all their energy in keeping the peace.

STATEMENT ON FAST

"I respectfully invite the heads of all the communities, including Englishmen, to meet and end this quarrel (Hindu-Muslim) which is a disgrace to religion and to humanity. It seems as if God has been dethroned. Let us reinstate Him in our hearts."

Announcing a fast for 21 days, Mahatma Gandhi issued the following statement from Delhi:

The recent events have proved unbearable for me. My helplessness is still more unbearable. My religion teaches me that whenever there is distress which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray. I have done so in connection with my own dearest ones. Nothing evidently that I say or write can bring the two communities together. I am, therefore, imposing on myself a fast of 21 days commencing from to-day and ending on Wednesday, October, 6. I reserve the liberty to drink water with or without salt. It is both a penance and a prayer.

As a penance, I need not have taken the public into my confidence, but I publish the fast as (let me hope) an effective prayer both to Hindus and to Mussalmans, who have hitherto worked in unison, not to commit suicide. I respectfully invite the heads of all the communities, including Englishmen, to meet and end this quarrel which is a disgrace to religion and to humanity. It seems as if God has been dethroned. Let us reinstate Him in our hearts.

HELPLESSNESS, NOT HOPELESSNESS

"A man with a grain of faith in God never loses hope, because he ever believes in the ultimate triumph of Truth. A man of God never strives after untruth and, therefore, he can never lose hope. On the contrary, his hope shines the brightest 'amidst encircling gloom.'"

Commenting on his Statement on Fast, Mahatmaji wrote:

I observe that in my note on fasting I have been made to say: "My hopelessness is still more unbearable." My statement mentions 'helplessness,' not hopelessness. A man with a grain of faith in God never loses hope, because he ever believes in the ultimate triumph of Truth. A man of God never strives after untruth and, therefore, he can never lose hope. On the contrary, his hope shines the brightest 'amidst encircling gloom.' But my helplessness is a very patent fact before me. I may not ignore it. I must ever confess it. There is a beautiful Tamil proverb which says: 'God is the sole Help of the helpless.' The truth of this never came upon me with so much force as it has come to-day. Handling large masses of men, dealing with them, speaking and acting for them is no joke for a man whose capacity God has so circumscribed. One has, therefore, to be ever on the watch. And the reader may rest assured that I took the final step after I had realized to the full my utter helplessness. And I cried out to God, even like Draupadi when she seemed to be abandoned by her five brave protectors. And her cry did not ascend to the Almighty in vain. That cry must not be from the lip. It has to be from the deepest recesses of one's heart. And, therefore, such a cry is only possible when one is in anguish. Mine has expressed itself in a fast which is by no means adequate for the issues involved. My heart continually says:

"Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

ALL ABOUT THE FAST

"I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is to be able to cement the two with my blood, if necessary. But before I can do so, I must prove to the Mussalmans that I love them as well as I love the Hindus. My religion teaches me to love all equally. May God help me to do so! My fast is, among other things, meant to qualify me for achieving that equal and selfless love."

I wish to assure the reader that the fast has not been undertaken without deliberation. As a matter of fact, my life has been at stake ever since the birth of Non-co-operation. I did not blindly embark upon it. I had ample warning of the dangers attendant upon it. No act of mine is done without prayer. Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance, man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. I can lay no such claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul. But I can rise only by experimenting upon myself and others. I believe in absolute oneness of God and, therefore, also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot, therefore, detach myself from the wickedest soul (nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous). Whether, therefore, I will or not, I must involve in my experiment the whole of my kind. Nor can I do without experiment. Life is but an endless series of experiments.

I knew that Non-co-operation was a dangerous experiment. Non-co-operation in itself is unnatural, vicious and sinful. But Non-violent Non-co-operation, I am convinced, is a sacred duty at times. I have proved it in many cases. But there was every possibility of mis-

take in its application to large masses. But desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. Non-violent Non-co-operation was the only alternative to anarchy and worse. Since it was to be non-violent, I had to put my life in the scales.

The fact that Hindus and Mussalmans, who were only two years ago apparently working together as friends, are now fighting like cats and dogs in some places, shows conclusively that the non-co-operation they offered was not non-violent. I saw the symptoms in Bombay, Chauri Chaura and in a host of minor cases. I did penance, then. It had its effect *pro tanto*. But this Hindu-Muslim tension was unthinkable. It became unbearable on hearing of the Kohat tragedy. On the eve of my departure from Sabarmati for Delhi, Sarojini Devi wrote to me that speeches and homilies on peace would not do. I must find out an effective remedy. She was right in saddling the responsibility on me. Had I not been instrumental in bringing into being the vast energy of the people? I must find the remedy if the energy proved self-destructive. I wrote to say that I should find it only by plodding. Empty prayer is as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. I little knew then, that the remedy was to be this prolonged fast. And yet I know that the fact is not prolonged enough for quenching the agony of my soul. Have I erred, have I been impatient, have I compromised with evil? I may have done all these things or none of them. All I know is what I see before me. If real non-violence and truth had been practised by the people who are now fighting, the gory duelling that is now going on would have been impossible. My responsibility is clearly somewhere.

I was violently shaken by Amethi, Shambhar and Gulbarga. I had read the reports about Amethi and Sambhar prepared by Hindu and Mussalman friends. I had learnt the joint finding of Hindu and Mussalman friends who went to Gulbarga. I was writhing in deep pain and yet I had no remedy. The news of Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done. I passed two nights in restlessness and pain. On Wed-

nesday, I knew the remedy. I must do penance. In the *Satyagraha Ashrama*, at the time of morning prayer we ask Shiva, God of Mercy, to forgive our sins knowingly or unknowingly committed. My penance is the prayer of a bleeding heart for forgiveness for sins unwittingly committed.

It is a warning to the Hindus and Mussalmans who have professed to love me. If they have loved me truly, and if I have been deserving of their love, they will do penance with me for the grave sin of denying God in their hearts. To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruth, to break the heads of innocent men, to desecrate temples or mosques, is a denial of God. The world is watching—some with glee and some with sorrow—the dog-fight that is proceeding in our midst. We have listened to Satan. Religion—call it by what name you like—is made of sterner stuff. The penance of Hindus and Mussalmans is not fasting, but retracing their steps. It is true penance for a Mussalman to harbour no ill for his Hindu brother, and an equally true penance for a Hindu to harbour none for his Mussalman brother.

I ask of no Hindu or Mussalman to surrender an iota of his religious principle. Only let him be sure that it is religion. But I do ask of every Hindu and Mussalman not to fight for an earthly gain. I should be deeply hurt if my fast made either community surrender on a matter of principle. My fast is a matter between God and myself.

I did not consult friends—not even Hakim Saheb who was closeted with me for a long time on Wednesday, nor Maulana Mahomed Ali under whose roof I am enjoying the privilege of hospitality. When a man wants to make up with his Maker, he does not consult a third party. He ought not to. If he has any doubt about it, he certainly must. But I had no doubt in my mind about the necessity of my step. Friends would deem it their duty to prevent me from undertaking the fast. Such things are not matters for consultation or argument. They are matters of feeling. When Rama decided to

fulfil his obligation, he did not swerve from his resolve, either by the weepings and wailings of his dear mother or the advice of his preceptors, or the entreaty of his people, or even the certainty of his father's death if he carried out his resolve. These things are momentary. Hinduism would not have been much of a religion, if Rama had not steeled his heart against every temptation. He knew that he had to pass through every travail, if he was to serve humanity and become a model for future generations.

But was it right for me to go through the fast under a Mussalman roof? Yes, it was. The fast is not born out of ill-will against a single soul. My being under a Mussalman roof ensures it against any such interpretation. It is in the fitness of things that this fast should be taken up and completed in a Mussalman house.

And who is Mahomed Ali? Only two days before the fast we had a discussion about a private matter in which I told him, what was mine was his and what was his was mine. Let me gratefully tell the public that I have never received warmer or better treatment than under Mahomed Ali's roof. Every want of mine is anticipated. The dominant thought of every one of his household is to make me and mine happy and comfortable. Doctors Ansari and Abdur Rahman have constituted themselves my medical advisers. They examine me daily. I have had many a happy occasion in my life. This is no less happy than the previous ones. Bread is not everything. I am experiencing here the richest love. It is more than bread for me.

It has been whispered that by being so much with Mussalman friends, I make myself unfit to know the Hindu mind. The Hindu mind is myself. Surely, I do not need to live amidst Hindus to know the Hindu mind when every fibre of my being is Hindu. My Hinduism must be a very poor thing, if it cannot flourish under influences the most adverse. I know instinctively what is necessary for Hinduism. But I must labour to discover the Mussalman mind. The closer I come to the best of Mussalmans, the juster I am likely to be in my

estimate of the Mussalmans and their doings. I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is to be able to cement the two with my blood, if necessary. But before I can do so, I must prove to the Mussalmans that I love them as well as I love the Hindus. My religion teaches me to love all equally. May God help me to do so ! My fast is, among other things, meant to qualify me for achieving that equal and selfless love.

THE INNER MEANING OF THE FAST

"This fast is but to purify myself, to strengthen myself.... After I have fasted and prayed I shall be all the stronger, with all my reverence for Islam, 'to appeal to both the communities.'"

We, who were privileged to be with Gandhiji, when he took that momentous decision to fast for 21 days, were also privileged to engage him in long discussions during the first week of the fast and my article produces the substance of two important conversations—one with me, and one with Maulana Shaukat Ali.

'Do you see the meaning of my fast on account of the Bombay and Chauri Chaura incidents?' he asked me. 'Yes', said I.

'Then, why cannot you see the meaning of this fast?'

'There you fasted by way of penance for what you thought was a crime committed by you. There is no such thing here. There is not the semblance of an offence that may be attributed to you.'

'What a misconception! In Chauri Chaura the culprits were those who had never seen me, never known me. To-day the culprits are those who know me and even profess to love me.'

'Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali', I said, 'are trying their best to quench the conflagration. But it is beyond them. Some men may be beyond their reach, even your reach. What can they do, what can you do? The situation will take time to improve.'

'That is another story', he answered. 'Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali are pure gold. They are trying their best, I know. But the situation is out of our hands to-day. It was in our hands six months ago. I know my fast will upset them. Indirectly it might have an effect on their minds, but it was not meant to produce an effect on any

one's mind.'

'That's all right,' I replied. 'But you have yet to tell me where your error lay for which you are doing this penance.'

'My error! Why, I may be charged with having committed a breach of faith with the Hindus. I asked them to befriend Muslims. I asked them to lay their lives and their property at the disposal of the Mussalmans for the protection of their Holy Places. Even to-day I am asking them to practise *ahimsa*, to settle quarrels by dying but not by killing. And what do I find to be the result? How many temples have been desecrated? How many sisters come to me with complaints? As I was saying to Hakimji yesterday, Hindu women are in mortal terror of Mussalman *goondas*. In many places, they fear to go out alone. I had a letter from—. How can I bear the way in which his little children were molested? How can I now ask the Hindus to put up with everything patiently? I gave them the assurance that the friendship of Mussalmans was bound to bear good fruit. I asked them to befriend them, regardless of the result. It is not in my power to-day to make good that assurance, neither is it in the power of Mahomed Ali or Shaukat Ali. Who listens to me? And yet I must ask the Hindus even to-day to die and not to kill. I can only do so by laying down my own life. I can teach them the way to die by my own example. There is no other way.....I launched Non-co-operation. To-day I find that people are non-co-operating against one another, without any regard for non-violence. What is the reason? Only this, that I myself am not completely non-violent. If I were practising non-violence to perfection, I should not have seen the violence I see around me to-day. My fast is, therefore, a penance. I blame no one. I blame only myself. I have lost the power wherewith to appeal to people. Defeated and helpless, I must submit my petition in His Court. Only He will listen, no one else.'

It was a torrent that I could hardly catch, much less reproduce. I asked at the end: 'But, Bapu, should the

penance take only this shape, and no other? Is fasting prescribed by our religion?

‘Certainly,’ said he. ‘What did the *Rishis* of old do? It is unthinkable that they ate anything during their penances—in some cases, gone through in caves, and for hundreds of years. Parvati who did penance to win Shiva would not touch even the leaves of trees, much less fruit or food. Hinduism is full of penance and prayer. I have decided on this fast with deeper deliberation than I gave to any of my previous fasts. I had such a fast in my mind, even when I conceived and launched Non-co-operation. At that time, I said to myself: ‘I am placing this terrible weapon in the hands of the people. If it is abused I must pay the price by laying down my life.’ That moment seems to have arrived to-day. The object of the previous fasts was limited. The object of this is unlimited, and there is boundless love at the back of it. I am to-day bathing in that ocean of love.’

Maulana Shaukat Ali came the next day. Maulana Mahomed Ali had built much on his coming, for, he had fondly hoped that he would probably shake Gandhiji’s resolve. Indeed, Gandhiji had promised him that he would give up the vow if Shaukat or he convinced him that the fast was morally or in any other way wrong. The long talk with him was, however, of no avail, as far as the continuance of the fast was concerned, but it threw even more light on the inner meaning.

‘What have we done, Mahatmaji, to remedy the situation?’ he exclaimed, ‘Almost nothing! You have been preaching through your paper, but you have yet undertaken no long journey. Pray, travel through the affected areas and purify the atmosphere. This fast is hardly the way to fight the wrong.’

Gandhiji replied: ‘It is for me a pure matter of religion. I looked around me, and questioned myself, and found that I was powerless. What could I effect even by means of a long tour? The masses suspect us to-day. Pray, do not believe that the Hindus in Delhi fully trust me. They were not unanimous in asking me to arbitrate.

And naturally. There have been murders. How can I hope to be heard by those who have suffered? I would ask them to forgive those who have murdered their dearest ones. Who would listen to me? The Anjuman refuses to listen to Hakimji. When we were in the midst of negotiations about their arbitration, I heard of Kohat. I asked myself: 'What are you going to do now?' I am an irrepressible optimist, but I always base my optimism on solid facts. You are also an irrepressible optimist, but you at times base yours on sand. No one will listen to you to-day. In Visanagar in Gujarat, they gave a cold shoulder to Mr. Abbas Tyebji and Mahadev. In Ahmedabad, a storm was nipped in the bud. Some trouble was brewing in Umreth when I left Gujarat. That I should be a passive witness of all these, shows the depth of my incapacity. There are hundreds of sisters whose love and affection I still possess. They are in mortal fear to-day. To them I want to show by my own example the way to die.

'Fight I do not mind, if it be fair, honourable, brave fighting between the two communities. But to-day it is all a story of unmitigated cowardice. They would throw stones and run away, murder and run away, go to court, put up false witnesses and cite false evidence. What a woeful record? How am I to make them brave? You are trying your best. But I should also try my best. I must recover the power to react on them.'

'No', rejoined Shaukat Ali. 'You have not failed. They listened to you; they were listening to you. In your absence they had other advisers. They listened to their advice and took to evil ways. They will still see the folly of their ways, I am sure. You have done much to reduce the poison in the popular mind. I would not bother about these disturbances at all. I would simply go and tell them: "Devils, play this game to your hearts' content. God is still there. You may kill one another. You cannot kill Him." Do not, Sir, come in the way of the Lord. You are wrestling with Him. Let Him have His way.'

'I, wrestling with Him!' exclaimed Gandhiji in surprise. 'If there is pride or defiance in me, it is all over

with me. Dear man, the fast is the result of several days' continued prayers. I have got up from sleep at 3 o'clock in the night and have asked Him what to do. On the 17th of September, the answer came like a flash! If I have erred, He will forgive me. All I have done, all I am doing, is done in a fully god-fearing spirit, and in the house of a god-fearing Mussalman at that. My religion says that only he who is prepared to suffer can pray to God. Fasting and prayer are common injunctions in my religion. But I know of this sort of penance even in Islam. In the life of the Prophet I have read that the Prophet often fasted and prayed, and forbade others to copy him. Some one asked him why he did not allow others to do the thing he himself was doing. 'Because I live on food divine,' he said. He achieved most of his great things by fasting and prayer. I learnt from him that only he can fast who has inexhaustible faith in God. The Prophet had revelations not in moments of ease and luxurious living. He fasted and prayed, kept awake for nights together and would be on his feet at all hours of the night as he received the revelations. Even at this moment, I see before me the picture of the Prophet thus fasting and praying. My dear Shaukat, I cannot bear the people accusing you and your brother of having broken your promises to me. I cannot bear the thought of such an accusation. I must die for it. This fast is but to purify myself, to strengthen myself. Let me not be misunderstood. I am speaking to you as though I was a Mussalman, because I have cultivated that respect for Islam which you have for it. After I have fasted and prayed I shall be all the stronger, with all my reverence for Islam, to appeal to both the communities. It is my own firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh. We have to fight hooliganism and we are not sufficiently spiritually strong to fight it.'

At this point, Shaukat Ali changed the line of his argument. 'Are you not,' said he, 'even bound to consider what a shock it will be to the country, this long fast of yours?'

'No. For man so often deceives himself! He often does things to please others, which he should have avoided. Religion, therefore, teaches him to stand before the world after having taken a particular resolve. What vanity to think that the world would be shocked at one's own great penance! And whose wishes are we to consider? There would be no limit. Had Rama stopped to consult and argue, he would never have gone on *Vanavasa* and rid the earth of its suffering. He waited for no one's advice. He went forth. For, he prized his plighted word more than his life. Only he can take great resolves who has indomitable faith in God and has fear of God.'

'One more question,' said Shaukat Ali as he stood up to go. 'Do you need to consult no one before arriving at such a decision? You need not even take into consideration the effect it would have on your health or body?'

'No. It is a matter between me and my Maker. And if I must consult someone, I had better not take the vow at all. You talk of the effect on my health and body? Well, if I am too weak to stand it, I may die. What is the body worth? Whilst I was in jail, I read with rapturous delight the lives of the Companions of the Prophet. There is a story that Hazrat Umar sent a present of 500 *dinars* to some one. He shrank from it, and began to cry. His wife asked him why he was crying. He said: '*Maya*—unreality—has come to me. What will happen to me?' The *dinars* were a present from such a holy man as Hazrat Umar. But he shrank from it because it was unreal, evanescent. And so is life. Let God keep this body if He has still to make some use of it. Let it perish if it has fulfilled His purpose. In fact, I had thought of going on a permanent vow of fasting if matters did not improve after the fast terminated. Hakimji asked me not to think of it. 'How can I cast it out of my mind?' said I. 'It is in my bones, it is part of my very being. I would ask Mussalmans to befriend the Hindus, if they think it is not contrary to their religion. If they think and tell me it is contrary to their religion, then I am sure I should have no cause to live any more.'

I should die. I had a plain talk with Khwaja Hassan Nizami Saheb also the other day. I told him: 'Why do you try to convert the waifs and strays and the untouchables? Better convert me, so that after I am converted many more might follow me. If those poor people embrace Islam, they will not do so because they understand the beauty of Islam, but for other reasons. Islam will not be a whit richer for them.'

It was an impressive dialogue. I have not even done bare justice to it. Shaukat Ali seemed quite overpowered. As he rose he said: "Three things I pray for every day; the first is Hindu-Muslim unity; the second, that my mother may live to see Islam and India free; the third, that Mahatma Gandhi's mission may be fulfilled."

—*Mahadev Desai*

GOD IS ONE

"The soul of religions is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time. Wise men will ignore the outward crust and see the same soul living under a variety of crusts."

"Who can name Him, and knowing what he says,
Say: "I believe in Him"? And who can feel,
And, with self-violence, to conscious wrong,
Hardening his heart, say: "I believe Him not!"
The All-Embracing, All-Sustaining One,
Say, does He not embrace, sustain, include,
Thee—Me—Himself? Bends not the sky above?
And earth, on which we are, is it not firm?
And over us, with constant kindly smile,
The sleepless stars keep everlasting watch!
Am I not here gazing into thine eyes?

And does not All, that is,
Seen and unseen—mysterious All—
Around thee and within,
Untiring agency,
Press on thy heart and mind?
—Fill thy whole heart with it—and, when thou art
lost in the consciousness of happiness,
Then call it what thou wilt
Happiness!—Heart!—Love!—God!
I have no name for it!
Nothing is all in all!
He is but sound and reek,
A mist around the glow of Heaven."

—Goethe's *Faust*

Last Thursday night, some Mussalman friends called on me by appointment. They appeared to me to be earnest and sincere. They had much to say against *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan*. I have said my say about these movements already. So far as possible I do not wish, during the privileged weeks,¹ to say anything on matters of

¹Weeks of fast.

controversy. I wish to engage the attention of the reader on the solution they offered. They said: "We believe in the divinity of the *Vedas*. We believe in Shri Krishnaji Maharaj and Ramchandraji Maharaj (the adjectives are theirs). Why cannot Hindus believe in the divinity of the Quran and say with us that there is no God but God and Mahomed is His Prophet? Ours is not an exclusive religion, but it is essentially inclusive."

I told them that the solution was not quite so simple as they put it. The formula they suggested might be good enough for the cultured few, but it would prove ineffective for the man in the street. For the Hindus, cow-protection and the playing of music even near the mosque was the substance of Hinduism, and for the Mussalmans cow-killing and prohibition of music was the substance of Islam. It was, therefore, necessary that the Hindus abandon the idea of compelling Mussalmans to stop cow-killing, and Mussalmans the idea of compelling the Hindus to stop music. The regulation of cow-slaughter and playing of music must be left to the good-will of the respective communities. Each practice would assume a becoming proportion with the growth of the tolerant spirit. But I do not propose to elaborate here this ticklish question.

I wish to examine the attractive formula presented by the Mussalman friends and state what is at least acceptable to me; and as my instinct is wholly Hindu, I know that what I am about to say will be acceptable to the vast mass of Hindus.

In fact, it is the average Mussalman who will not accept the divinity of the *Vedas* and the other Hindu scriptures, or Krishna or Rama as prophets or incarnations of the Deity. With the Hindu, it is a new-fangled notion to revile the Quran and the Prophet. I have known the Prophet spoken of with reverence in Hindu circles. There are even Hindu songs paying tribute to Islam.

Take the first half of the formula. God is certainly One. He has no second. He is unfathomable, unknowable and unknown to the vast majority of mankind.

He is everywhere. He sees without eyes, and hears without ears. He is formless and indivisible. He is uncreate, has no father, mother or child; and yet He allows Himself to be worshipped as father, mother, wife and child. He allows himself even to be worshipped as stock and stone, although He is none of these things. He is the most elusive. He is the nearest to us if we would but know the fact. But He is farthest from us when we do not want to realize His omnipresence. There are many gods in the *Vedas*. Other scriptures call them angels. But the *Vedas* sing of only one God.

I have no hesitation in regarding the Quran as revealed, as I have none in regarding the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Granth Saheb and any other clean scriptures as revealed. Revelation is the exclusive property of no nation, no tribe. If I know Hinduism at all, it is essentially inclusive and ever-growing, ever-responsive. It gives the freest scope to imagination; speculation and reason. I have found not the slightest difficulty in Hindu circles about evoking reverence for the Quran and the Prophet. But I have found difficulty in Mussalman circles about evoking the same reverence for the *Vedas* or the incarnations. I had a very good Mussalman client in South Africa. He is, alas, dead now. The relation of client and counsel developed into one of close companionship and mutual regard. We often had religious discussions. My friend, though not learned in any sense of the term, had an intellect as sharp as a razor. He knew everything of the Quran. He knew something of other religions also. He was interested in my accepting Islam. I said to him: "I can pay full respect to the Quran and the Prophet, why do you ask me to reject the *Vedas* and the incarnations? They have helped me to be what I am. I find the greatest consolation from the Bhagavad Gita and 'Tulsidas' *Ramayana*. I frankly confess that the Quran, the Bible and the other scriptures of the world, in spite of my great regard for them, do not move me as do the Gita of Krishna and the *Ramayana* of 'Tulsidas.'" The friend despaired of me and had no hesitation in saying that there must be something wrong with me. His,

however, is not an exceptional case because I have since met many Mussalman friends who have held the same view. I do, however, believe that this is a passing phase. I share Justice Ameer Ali's view that Islam, in the days of Harun-al-Rashid and Mamun, was the most tolerant amongst the world's religions. But there was a reaction against the liberalism of the teachers of their times. The reactionaries had many learned, able and influential men amongst them and they very nearly overwhelmed the liberal and tolerant teachers and philosophers of Islam. We, in India, are still suffering from the effect of that reaction. But I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam has sufficient in itself to become purged of illiberalism and intolerance. We are fast reaching the time when the acceptance of the formula suggested by the friends will be a common thing among mankind. The need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions. We want to reach not the dead level, but unity in diversity. Any attempt to root out traditions, effects of heredity, climate and other surroundings is not only bound to fail but is a sacrilege. The soul of religions is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time. Wise men will ignore the outward crust and see the same soul living under a variety of crusts. For Hindus to expect Islam, Christianity or Zoroastrianism to be driven out of India is as idle a dream as it would be for Mussalmans to have only Islam of their imagination rule the world. But if belief in one God and the race of His Prophets in a never-ending chain is sufficient for Islam, then, we are all Mussalmans, but we are also all Hindus and Christians. Truth is the exclusive property of no single scripture.

MY REFUGE

“Man is nothing. Napoleon planned much and found himself a prisoner at St. Helena. The mighty Kaiser aimed at the crown of Europe and is reduced to the status of a private gentleman. God had so willed it. Let us contemplate such examples and be humble.”

To-day is the twentieth day of my penance and prayer. Presently, from the world of peace I shall enter the world of strife. The more I think of it, the more helpless I feel. So many look to me to finish the work begun by the Unity Conference. So many expect me to bring together the political parties. I know that I can do nothing. God can do everything. O God! make me Thy fit instrument and use me as Thou wilt.

Man is nothing. Napoleon planned much and found himself a prisoner in St. Helena. The mighty Kaiser aimed at the crown of Europe and is reduced to the status of a private gentleman. God had so willed it. Let us contemplate such examples and be humble.

During these days of grace, privilege and peace, I have hummed to myself a hymn we often sing at the *Satyagraha Ashrama*. It is so good that I cannot resist the pleasure of sharing a free rendering of it with the reader. The words of the hymn better express my state than anything else I can write.

Here they are :

My honour, O God! is in Thy keeping;
Thou art ever my Refuge,
For Thou art Protector of weak.

It is Thy promise to listen to the wail of sinners;
I am a sinner of old, help me
Thou to cross this ocean of darkness.

It is Thine to remove the sin
 And the misery of mankind.
 Be gracious to Tulsidas
 And make him Thy devotee.¹

¹ राग पीछ—तीन ताल

रघुबीर ! तुमका मेरी लाज ।
 सदा सदा मैं सरन तिहारी, तूम बड़े गरीब निवाज ॥
 पतित उधारन बिरुद तिहारो श्रवणन सुनी अवाज ॥
 हौं तो पतित पुरातन कहिये, पार उतारो जहाज ॥
 अध-खंडन, दुख-भंजन जनके, यही तिहारो काज ॥
 तुलसिदास पर किरपा करिये, भक्ति-दान देहु आज ॥

THE KOHAT VISIT

"I thought, and still think, that heart-unity between the two communities can be brought about by non-officials rather than by officials. The latter can undoubtedly assist in many silent unofficial ways, but my invariable experience shows that officials as officials can only bring about an armed neutrality, but cannot restore friendship."

The following correspondence passed between Gandhiji and the Viceroy in connection with the former's proposed visit to Kohat :

Gandhiji addressed the following letter to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy on the 16th:

"As soon as I have gathered sufficient strength, it is my intention, if permitted, to go to Kohat in the company of some Mussalman and some Hindu friends. My object in wanting to go to Kohat is to find out from the inhabitants the causes of the Hindu-Muslim dissensions and, if possible, with the help of friends, to bring about peace between the two communities. I shall thank you to let me know as early as possible whether His Excellency the Viceroy will permit me and my friends to proceed to Kohat for the purpose mentioned."

On the 24th, Gandhiji sent the following telegram as no reply had been received till then :

"May I have a reply by wire to my letter dated the 16th."

In reply to the above, the following telegram was received from the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, dated October 26th :

"You do not state in your letter dated October 16th when you propose to visit Kohat. Please state for His Excellency's information on what date approximately it is your desire to visit Kohat. Kindly send your reply by telegram."

Gandhiji thereupon wired as follows on the 27th :

"Thanks for the wire. It is my intention to leave Delhi with my colleagues on November 1, or as early as possible thereafter, to

stay at Rawalpindi for two or three days and then proceed to Kohat staying there for three or four days."

In reply to the above, the following telegram dated the 28th was received :

"Thanks for your telegram. From the information he has received from the N. W. F. Province, H. E. the Viceroy is of opinion that the dates you mention are not propitious for your visit to Kohat and that you will be very well advised to defer it until later.

"As you are aware, efforts have been made for some time past to bring the two communities together again at Kohat to facilitate the re-settlement of Hindus and to induce the resumption of former neighbourly relations. If the course of those negotiations continues undisturbed, there is good hope of permanent peace in future, but at the moment feelings are raw and any cause may again arouse irritation in the recent wounds.

"There is apprehension, indeed it is almost inevitable, that excitement may be aroused by your visit which, despite your intentions, may cause a set-back there. The Hindus will naturally gather in considerable numbers to meet you and it is probable the Mahomedans will also assemble forces and that trans-border Muslims might come in to support the latter. It is feared that the result would be to range the two communities into sharply separated and hostile camps and to intensify the feelings in each camp and there might be even more deplorable results from friction between the two camps.

"For this reason, in His Excellency's view, it would be most unwise and undesirable for you to visit Kohat with your friends on the dates you indicate. It is appreciated that your desire is to foster unity between the two communities; but it must be remembered that in this frontier district forces may be set in motion which it may be difficult to control.

"His Excellency regrets that he cannot countenance your visit at present. It may be possible for His Excellency to reconsider this view at a later date when the position has changed and when feelings have had sufficient time to become less openly and actively bitter and only inner prejudices from past events at Kohat remain to be finally soothed, healed or eradicated."

Telegram from Gandhiji to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, dated October 28 :

"Thanks for the wire. While I bow to His Excellency's decision, I venture to state that it was not my intention to encourage Hindu refugees at Rawalpindi to return to Kohat unless the Kohat Mussalmans were willing and eager to receive them with open arms.

"Had I been permitted to proceed to Kohat, it was my intention to use with the assistance of Mussalman friends the friendly relations which, I believe, I enjoy with Mussalmans to bring about an amicable settlement. I thought, and still think, that heart-unity between the two communities can be brought about by non-officials rather than by officials. The latter can undoubtedly assist in many silent unofficial ways, but my invariable experience shows that officials as officials can only bring about an armed neutrality, but cannot restore friendship.

"As the public have been led to believe that my visit to Kohat was impending, I propose to publish this correspondence unless His Excellency desires otherwise."

Telegram from the Private Secretary to the Viceroy to Gandhiji, dated October 28, in reply to the above :

"Thank you for your telegram. His Excellency has noted your views. Having regard to the special considerations, to which he referred in my previous telegram, he must adhere to the decision. There is no objection to your publishing the correspondence."

THE KOHAT TRAGEDY

"I would welcome a resolution by the Government that no one need look to them for protection in inter-communal quarrels. If we would learn each party to defend itself against encroachment upon its liberty by the other, we would be well on the road to *Swaraj*."

The Government of India has rung down the curtain upon the Kohat tragedy. In the Viceregal reply to Pandit Malaviyaji, the Government had prepared the public for some resolution as is now before the public. The resolution is a demonstration of the Government's unchallengeable supremacy and disregard of public opinion, as it is also a demonstration of national impotence. To me the Kohat tragedy is not so much a result of Hindu-Muslim tension, as of the utter worthlessness and incompetence of the local administration. Had they performed their elementary duty of protecting life and property, the wanton destruction begun and continued in broad day-light could have been easily prevented. But like Nero, the authority watched and danced while Rome was burning. The authority cannot plead helplessness. It had ample resources at its disposal. It was at no time overwhelmed except by its own criminal indifference and callousness.

And now the Government of India has become partner in the crime by white-washing the local officials and even converting their neglect or worse into 'coolness and courage.'

One would have expected a full, open and independent inquiry. But nothing beyond a departmental inquiry at which the public was unrepresented took place. Its finding can command no public confidence. The refugees, from Rai Bahadur Sardar Makhan Singh downward, whom my Mussalman colleagues and I saw, whilst admit-

ting that a pamphlet containing the highly insulting verses was published by Lala Jiwandas, said that ample amends were made for the publication by the Hindus and that the Hindu firing was in self-defence and after the destruction had been started by the Mussalmans. On behalf of the Kohat Mussalmans, it was contended that sufficient amends were not made with regard to the pamphlet and that the Mussalman destruction and firing took place after the Hindus had opened fire and taken Mussalman life. Unfortunately, the Mussalmans of Kohat not having come to Rawalpindi, we were unable to find out the real truth. It is, therefore, difficult to say that the Government of India's distribution of blame is erroneous. But its finding cannot be accepted as an impartial or acceptable judgment. The Hindus of Kohat cannot be expected to accept and submit to the finding. Nor can such a finding, because it seems to favour the Mussalman contention, be any consolation to the Mussalmans of Kohat. For, it would be wrong for the Mussalman public to applaud the Government of India's finding, because it for the moment seems to support the Mussalman contention. Any finding to be satisfactory must be joint and arrived at by Hindus and Mussalmans of proved impartiality. The Government of India resolution is, therefore, a challenge to both the communities. It tells the Hindu refugees to return to Kohat on pain of submission to humiliating conditions. It bribes the Mussalmans to impose humiliation on their Hindu brethren. I hope that Hindus will prefer a life of penury outside Kohat but without humiliation, to a life of plenty in Kohat with humiliation. I hope that Mussalmans will be manly enough to refuse the bait offered by the Government and decline to be party to imposing humiliation on their Hindu brethren, who are in a hopeless minority in Kohat. Whosesocver the initial blunder and provocation, the fact stands that the Hindus were practically forced out of Kohat. It is up to the Mussalmans, therefore, to go to Rawalpindi and take the refugees back to Kohat with friendliness and with full guarantee for the safety of their lives and property. The Hindus outside

Kohat should make it easy for the Mussalmans to make the approach. The Mussalmans outside should insist upon those in Kohat recognizing their primary obligation to the Hindu minority. On a proper and honourable solution of this delicate problem lies, in a large measure, the success of the efforts to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity.

The sooner we, both co-operators and non-co-operators, cease to rely upon Government protection against one another, the better it will be for us and the quicker and more lasting will be the solution. Viewed in that light, the indifference of the Kohat officials is to be welcomed. History would have been differently and more honourably written if the Hindus had not sought the protection of officials, had stuck to their homes and without offering any defence, or even in the act of forcibly defending themselves and their property and their dependents had been reduced to cinders. I would welcome a resolution by the Government that no one need look to them for protection in inter-communal quarrels. If we would learn each party to defend itself against encroachment upon its liberty by the other, we would be well on the road to *Swaraj*. It would be a fine training in self-defence and self-respect or, which is the same thing, *Swaraj*. There are two ways of defence. The best and the most effective is not to defend at all, but to remain at one's post risking every danger. The next best, but equally honourable method is to strike bravely in self-defence and put one's life in the most dangerous positions. A few pitched battles between the two will soon teach them the uselessness of breaking one another's heads. It will teach them that to fight thus is not to serve God but to serve Satan.

I conclude this article by repeating the promise I made to the refugees in Rawalpindi. If they will not return to Kohat till they receive cordial invitation from the Kohat Mussalmans, I shall be prepared, as soon as the engagements already taken up are finished, to go to Rawalpindi in company with M. Shaukat Ali and attempt to smooth the relations between the two, or failing that to help them to find suitable occupation in life.

HOW NOT TO DO IT

“Fortunately, Hindu-Muslim unity does not finally depend upon religious or political leaders. It depends upon the enlightened selfishness of the masses belonging to both the communities. They cannot be misled for all time.”

Jamiat-ul-Tabligh Islam has favoured me with the following translation of a resolution recently passed by it :

“Resolved that the responsibility for the entire series of deplorable events, which took place during the recent disturbances at Kohat and which resulted in great loss of life and property to the residents of that place, lies with the person or persons who published at Kohat the offensive and provoking pamphlet which contained vile attacks on Islam and deeply wounded the religious feelings of Mussalmans. The Hindus who fired shots and killed Mussalmans are also responsible for aggravating the delicate situation still further. This Jamiat expresses sympathy with all those residents of Kohat, irrespective of creed and caste, who suffered loss of life or property in the course of these disturbances. As a religious society, this Jamiat feels bound to point to Mahatma Gandhi and other political leaders that unless scurrilous attacks, in writing or by speech, on religion and founders and leaders of religious movements are absolutely stopped, the creation and maintenance of Hindu-Muslim unity in India will always be found impossible.”

I am unable to congratulate the Jamiat on its resolution. It seems that both the parties have made up their minds on the main facts, although no impartial inquiry has yet been held. Is it an established fact that the responsibility for the ‘entire series of deplorable events’ lies with ‘the person or persons who published at Kohat the offensive and provoking pamphlet?’ Is it also an established fact that ‘the Hindus who fired shots and killed Mussalmans are also responsible for aggravating the delicate situation still further?’ If the two facts above-mentioned are clearly established, the Hindus at least are not entitled to any sympathy which the Jamiat

shows for the loss in life and property suffered by them. For, they have reaped what they have sown. The Jamiat is, therefore, inconsistent in showing sympathy to the Hindus. And what is the point in the Jamiat telling me and other political leaders that 'unless scurrilous attacks on religion and founders of religious movements are absolutely stopped, the creation and maintenance of Hindu-Muslim unity in India will always be found impossible?' If what the Jamiat contends is true, is not the impossibility of unity a fact for the Jamiat to note as well as the political leaders? And must Hindu-Muslim unity be impossible because some person delivers attacks on religion? According to the Jamiat, one insane Hindu or one insane Mussalman is enough to make Hindu-Muslim unity impossible. Fortunately, Hindu-Muslim unity does not finally depend upon religious or political leaders. It depends upon the enlightened selfishness of the masses belonging to both the communities. They cannot be misled for all time. But I hope that the original resolution of the Jamiat does not read as bad as the translation before me.

KOHAT HINDUS

"I am in a position to reiterate my advice to the Hindus that in their place I should not return to Kohat unless there is an honourable peace with the Mussalmans without the Government intervention."

I know that the pages of this week's *Young India* will be searched for the finding¹ of Maulana Shaukat Ali

¹The statements of Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Shaukat Ali were published in *Young India* of March 26th, 1925. In his statement Mahatmaji ascribed the happenings at Kohat on September 9, 1924, to "the resentment felt by the Mussalmans over the resentment felt in their turn by the Hindus over the conversions (so-called in my opinion) of Hindus—men and married women—and consequent steps taken by them, the Hindus. The desire of the Parachas (Muslim traders of Kohat) to oust the Hindus of Kohat was another. The resentment felt over the alleged abduction by Sardar Makhani Singh's son of a married Muslim girl was the third." Mahatmaji also found that while the pamphlet circulated by Lala Jiwandas, Secretary of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, was offensive, the Hindus had made sufficient reparations for it subsequently. Mahatmaji found that the Muslims had no excuse whatsoever for their furious onslaught on the Hindus on the 10th of September and the following days. As regards the Government, Mahatmaji said that in ignoring the repeated warnings given by the Hindus that Muslims were preparing for their sack and that their lives and property were in danger, "the authorities on the spot betrayed callous indifference, incompetence and weakness." He condemned the forced conversions of Hindus to Islam.

Maulana Shaukat Ali, in his statement, found that the Hindus were as much responsible as the Mussalmans for the affair. The Hindus were clever and better educated and were growing in strength at the expense of the Muslims in Kohat. The officials, though not anxious that the Hindus should grow in strength, were taking special advantage of the situation to further emasculate the Muslim gentry. He repudiated that there were forced conversions and found that the removal of tuft and the use of Muslim caps by Hindus were intended by friendly Muslims to protect Hindus from Muslim mob fury.—*Babu Rajendra Prasad.*

and myself on the tragedy of last September. I am sorry to disappoint the curious. For Maulana Shaukat Ali is not with me and I must not publish anything without his first seeing it. I may, however, tell the reader that I have already discussed my impressions with Pandit Motilalji, then Pandit Malaviyaji and lastly with Hakim Sahab Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari and the Ali Brothers. And I have just finished writing them out during my journey to Sabarmati. My notes will be immediately forwarded to Maulana Shaukat Ali and I shall hope to publish them together with Maulana Shaukat Ali's endorsement, addition, or amendment as the case may be. But apart from the finding, I am in a position to reiterate my advice to the Hindus that in their place I should not return to Kohat, unless there is an honourable peace with the Mussalmans without the Government intervention. This is not possible at the present moment. For, unfortunately, the Muslim Working Committee which is at present guiding the Mussalmans of Kohat was not and would not be represented before us. I can appreciate the delicate position of the Hindus. They do not want to lose their property. The Maulana Sahab and I have failed to bring about peace. We have failed even to draw the principal Mussalmans for a discussion. Nor am I in a position to say that we should succeed in our attempt in the near future. In the circumstances, the Hindus are at liberty to take any course they may consider advisable. In spite of our failure, I can only advise one course: 'Don't return till the Mussalmans take you to Kohat with self-respect and dignity.' But I know that this is cold comfort except for those who are able to stand on their own legs and are in need of no advice from any quarter whatsoever. Such is not the position of the Kohat refugees. I have conveyed my views to Pandit Malaviyaji. He has been their guide from the beginning and they must act as he advises them. Lalaji came to Pindi but he was unfortunately laid up in bed. My own considered opinion is given in the statement sent to Maulana Shaukat Ali. But I confess in advance that it will bring no solace to them. I am but a broken reed, not worth relying upon.

But there is no hesitation about my advice regarding what the refugees should do whilst they are outside Kohat. I cannot help remarking that it is demoralizing for men and women, who have strong arms and legs and who are otherwise physically fit, to subsist on charity. They must find out some occupation for themselves or with the aid of the local men. I have suggested carding, spinning and even weaving. But they may do any other useful work they choose or that may be chosen for them. The idea is that no person, man or woman, who is physically fit should live on charity. There must be always enough occupation in a well-ordered state for all who are willing to work. The refugees must be able to give a good account of every minute of their time whilst they are being supported by the nation. 'Idle hands some mischief still will ever find to do'—is not a mere school-boy rhyme. It contains a profound truth which can be verified by everyone for himself. Let there be no distinction between rich and poor, high and low. They are all bed-fellows in adversity. And the rich and the well-to-do should set an example to the others by labouring usefully even though they may not be drawing rations. What an incalculable good it must be to a nation whose members know an occupation which can stand them in good stead in distress! The refugees' life would have taken a nobler turn if they had all been spinners or carders or weavers. The refugees' camp would, then, have presented the appearance of a busy-hive and could have been kept up indefinitely. If the men do not decide to return at once, it is not yet too late to mend. It is a mistake to issue dry rations. It is no doubt less trouble to the committee of management, but it means more waste and utter indiscipline among the refugees. They should place themselves under soldiers' discipline, keeping regular hours for rising, washing, praying, feeding, working and retiring. There is no reason why there should not be *Ramayana* readings or such other readings for them. All this requires thought, care, attention and diligence. Given these, the calamity could be turned into a blessing in disguise.

THE EMBARGO

"My purpose, so far as it is humanly possible, is to avoid taking a single step that may even indirectly precipitate violence on the part of the people. But a time must come when non-violent resistance on my part may become a duty in total disregard of untoward consequences."

I publish the following telegraphic correspondence between the Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy and myself :

Telegram to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy

10th Feb. 1925

"Does His Excellency now consider it possible to permit me and my colleagues to visit Kohat during beginning March."

Reply to the above

13th Feb. 1925

"His Excellency the Viceroy desires me to thank you for your telegram and the courtesy that prompted it. His Excellency would have been glad to be able to fall in with your wishes. But his attention has been called to the advice you have just given in *Young India* to the Kohat Hindus not to return to Kohat unless the Muslims make honourable peace with them without Government intervention. The only construction His Excellency can put on this article is that, if you went to Kohat, your influence would be directed towards the break-down of the recent settlement, the effecting of which was a matter of great concern to His Excellency and from which he hopes and believes an enduring reconciliation will spring. His Excellency is sure, therefore, that you yourself will appreciate how impossible it is for him to fall in with your wishes."

Second Telegram to Private Secretary to the Viceroy

19th Feb. 1925

"Thanks telegram. In *Young India*, mentioned in your telegram I have stated ideal, but have no desire to disturb withdrawal

prosecution. My purpose is to establish real peace which I hold is almost impossible with Government intervention or better still, without private and spontaneous effort. Intervention of my friends and self can only assist Government effort, so far as it promotes substantial peace. Please reply Sabarmati."

Reply to the above

22nd Feb. 1925

"His Excellency desires me to thank you for your telegram. The agreement which has now been laboriously reached was only possible with the spontaneous help of private persons of both communities. It is, of course, of the nature of a compromise between the two communities and any alteration in its terms would upset the whole settlement. Moreover, it is only on the basis of this settlement that His Excellency consented after much heart-searching to a withdrawal of prosecutions. While, therefore, His Excellency appreciates that your own desire is also for peace, he feels that your proposed visit would lead to a re-opening of the case and, therefore, however much he may regret it, he must abide by the previous decision."

It is quite true that my going to Kohat is likely to re-open the settlement in so far as it is intrinsically bad. It is a settlement brought about by coercion, for it has been arrived at under threat of prosecutions on either side. It is not a voluntary settlement that pleases the parties. Both the Hindus and the Mussalmans, whom Maulana Shaukat Ali and I met at Rawalpindi, said as much. But my visit to Kohat, whatever else it may or may not bring about, can never mean greater estrangement between the parties. If, therefore, I had been permitted together with Mussalman friends to proceed to Kohat, it would have meant furtherance of peace which the Viceroy claims to have at heart equally with me. Whilst, therefore, I was able somewhat to understand the refusal when the things were still in a ferment, I am unable to understand the prohibition at the present moment. Friends were not wanting who suggested that I should have proceeded to Kohat without permission or intimation and taken the risk of a prohibition order. I could not do so, unless I meant to disobey any such order and court imprisonment. And as I hold that there is no

atmosphere at the present moment in the country for any such step, I could not take the proposed risk. I can only hope that the authorities will appreciate the deliberation with which I am avoiding every step that may precipitate civil resistance. My purpose, so far as it is humanly possible, is to avoid taking a single step that may even indirectly precipitate violence on the part of the people. But a time must come when non-violent resistance on my part may become a duty in total disregard of untoward consequences. I do not myself know when such a time can or will come. I know that it is a possibility. But when that time comes, I hope that friends will not find me wanting. Till then, I must ask them to bear with me.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"A government can give protection against thieves and robbers, but not even a Swaraj Government will be able to protect people against a wholesale boycott by one community of another. ... When quarrels become a normal thing of life, it is called civil war and parties must fight it out themselves."

In the course of his Presidential Address at the 39th Indian National Congress, Belgaum, Gandhiji said :

Hindu-Muslim unity is not less important than the spinning-wheel. It is the breath of our life. I do not need to occupy much of your time on this question, because the necessity of it for *Swaraj* is almost universally accepted. I say 'almost' because I know some Hindus and some Mussalmans who prefer the present condition of dependence on Great Britain if they cannot have either wholly Hindu or wholly Mussalman India. Happily, their number is small.

I share Maulana Shaukat Ali's robust optimism that the present tension is a mere temporary distemper. The *Khilafat* agitation, in which Hindus made common cause with their Mussalman brethren, and the Non-co-operation that followed it caused an awakening among the hitherto slumbering masses. It has given a new consciousness to the classes as well as the masses. Interested persons who were disappointed during the palmy days of Non-co-operation, now that it has lost the charm of novelty, have found their opportunity, and are trading upon the religious bigotry or the selfishness of both the communities. The result is written in the history of the feuds of the past two years. Religion has been travestied. Trifles have been dignified by the name of religious tenets which, the fanatics claim, must be observed at any cost. Economic and political causes have been brought into play for the sake of fomenting trouble. The culminat-

ing point was reached in Kohat. The tragedy was aggravated by the callous indifference of the local authority. I must not tarry to examine the causes or to distribute the blame. I have not the material for the task, even if I was minded for it. Suffice it to say, that the Hindu refugees fled for fear of their lives. There is in Kohat an overwhelming Mussalman majority. They have, in so far as is possible under a foreign domination, effective political control. It is up to them, therefore, to show that the Hindus are as safe in the midst of their majority, as they would be if the whole population of Kohat was Hindu. The Mussalmans of Kohat may not rest satisfied till they have brought back to Kohat every one of the refugees. I hope that the Hindus would not fall into the trap laid for them by the Government and would resolutely decline to go back till the Mussalmans of Kohat have given them full assurances as to their lives and property.

The Hindus can live in the midst of an overwhelming Mussalman majority only if the latter are willing to receive and treat them as friends and equals, just as Mussalmans, if in a minority, must depend for honourable existence in the midst of a Hindu majority on the latter's friendliness. A government can give protection against thieves and robbers, but not even a Swaraj Government will be able to protect people against a wholesale boycott by one community of another. Governments can deal with abnormal situations. When quarrels become a normal thing of life, it is called civil war and parties must fight it out themselves. The present Government being foreign—in reality, a veiled military rule—has resources at its command for its protection against any combination we can make and has, therefore, the power, if it has the will, to deal with our class feuds. But no Swaraj Government with any pretension to being a popular government can possibly be organized and maintained on a war footing. A Swaraj Government means a Government established by the free joint will of Hindus, Mussalmans and others. Hindus and Mussalmans, if they desire *Swaraj*, have perforce to settle their differences

amicably.

The Unity Conference at Delhi has paved the way for a settlement of religious differences. The Committee of the All Parties' Conference is, among other things, expected to find a workable and just solution of the political differences not only between Hindus and Mussalmans but between all classes and all castes, sects or denominations. Our goal must be removal, at the earliest possible moment, of communal or sectional representation. A common electorate must impartially elect its representatives on the sole ground of merit. Our services must be likewise impartially manned by the most qualified men and women. But till that time comes and communal jealousies or preferences become a thing of the past, minorities who suspect the motives of majorities must be allowed their way. The majorities must set the example of self-sacrifice.

TOWARDS UNITY

"I am opposed to it (communal representation) with all my heart, but I would agree to anything as long as it ensures peace and is honourable to both the parties."

The All Parties' Committee met to consider the question referred to it by the Conference. It appointed a sub-committee of nearly fifty to consider the question. The sub-committee appointed a smaller committee to consider all possible *Swaraj* schemes and report to the sub-committee the results of its deliberations. Dr. Besant is labouring at this smaller committee with her usual application and energy which put to shame younger men and women. But, naturally, the attention centred round the Hindu-Muslim problem; not that it is intrinsically more important except for individuals like me, but because it blocks all progress towards *Swaraj*. The sub-committee proved too formal for the task. It was necessary to avoid the reserve and the stiffness even of a committee and to be absolutely informal and to have a still smaller number of persons. This was done and a few of each community met at Hakim Saheb's house. The result has been succinctly given to the Press by Pandit Motilal Nehru. I agree that there is no cause for anxiety or disappointment. For all want a solution. Some want it at once, some regard the time not to be seasonable, some would sacrifice everything to get a solution, others would be cautious and would wait till they have secured what to them is an indispensable minimum. But all agreed that a solution of the problem was essential to *Swaraj*. And since all want *Swaraj*, a solution must not be beyond the reach of those who are engaged in finding it. The prospect was never so bright as when we parted to meet again on 28th February. Meanwhile, every one is to explore fresh avenues to a settle-

ment.

The public will want to know my view of communal representation. I am opposed to it with all my heart, but I would agree to anything so long as it ensures peace and is honourable to both the parties. In the absence of agreement on the plans suggested by either party, I have presented a solution which might answer the purpose. But I need not discuss it at the present stage. I hope that the responsible members of both the communities will leave no stone unturned whether by means of private, quiet talks or by means of a public expression of their opinions. I hope, too, that newspaper-men will write nothing to irritate any party, but will observe discreet silence where they cannot usefully assist.

ON ANOTHER'S LAND

"Many things are impossible and yet are the only things right. A reformer's business is to make the impossible possible by giving an ocular demonstration of the possibility in his own conduct."

A friend says :

"You ask us at every turn to yield to Mussalmans, you ask us not to resort to law courts on any account. Have you fully considered the consequences of what you are saying? Have you taken into account human nature? What are we to do when mosques are being put up on our ground without our permission? What are we to do when unscrupulous men bring suits against us for monies we do not owe, or when they actually rob us of our possessions? In giving your answers you must take our poor selves into consideration. You dare not say you do not know us. Or, if you give your *fatwas* in utter obliviousness of us, you must not blame us if we do not respond to your counsels of perfection. Let me tell you that you are sometimes impossible."

I sympathize with the friends who talk to me in this strain. I am prepared to recognize the limitations of human nature for the very simple reason that I recognize my own. But precisely as recognizing my own limitations, I do not deceive myself by refusing to distinguish between what I ought to do and what I fail to do. I must not deceive others by refusing to notice the same distinction and telling them that what they propose to do is not only perhaps defensible but also right. Many things are impossible and yet are the only things right. A reformer's business is to make the impossible possible by giving an ocular demonstration of the possibility in his own conduct. Whoever thought it possible before Edison to speak to people hundreds of miles away from us? Marconi went a step further and made wireless communication possible. We are daily witnessing the phenomenon of the impossible of yesterday becoming

the possible of to-day. As in physical science, so in psychological.

Now for the concrete questions. The question of mosques built on another's land without his permission is incredibly simple. If A is in possession of his land and some one comes to build something on it, be it even a mosque, A has the right at the first opportunity of pulling down the structure. Any building of the shape of a mosque is not a mosque. A building to be a mosque must be duly consecrated. A building put up on another's land without his permission is a pure robbery. Robbery cannot be consecrated. If A has not the will or the capacity to destroy the building mis-called mosque, he has the right of going to a law court to have the building pulled down. Law courts are forbidden to convicted non-co-operators, but not to those who require such conviction. Moreover, full non-co-operation we have never practised. A practice has a flaw in it when it is not only inconvenient, but clearly defeats the end it was designed to serve. So long as I own property I must defend it, whether by the force of law courts or by the force of my own strong arms. The act is in essence the same. Our national non-co-operation is or was with a system. It presupposed co-operation among ourselves in a general way. But when we non-co-operate among ourselves, national non-co-operation is a mirage. Individual non-co-operation is possible when we own not a clod of earth. It is possible only for a *Sannyasi*. The highest fulfilment of religion, therefore, requires a giving up of all possession. Having ascertained the law of our being, we must set about reducing it to practice to the extent of our capacity and no further. That is the middle way. When a robber comes to take away A's property, he can deliver the property to him if he recognizes in him a blood-brother. If he does not feel like one, but dreads the robber and would wish that some one was near to knock him down, he must try to knock him down and take the consequence. If he has the desire but not the ability to fight the robber, he must allow himself to be robbed and then call in the assistance of law courts to

regain the lost property. In both the cases he has as good a chance of losing his property as of regaining it. If he is a sane man like me, he would reach with me the conclusion that to be really happy he must not own anything or own things only so long as his neighbours permit him. In the last resort we live not by our physical strength but by sufferance. Hence, the necessity of uttermost humility and absolute reliance on God. This is living by soul-force. This is highest self-expression.

Let us bear the law in mind, not as an academic and attractive proposition when it is written on paper, but as the law of our being to be continually realized, and let us fashion our practice in accordance with the law *and* the measure of our ability to live up to it.

THE NATIONAL WEEK

"I should despair of real unity if we would fight under the shadow of the British Uniform and perjured evidence before British courts. We must be men before we rule ourselves."

The 6th and 13th of April must for ever remain green in Indian memory. 6th April 1919, witnessed an unexpected and huge mass awakening of the nation. On 13th of April, the nation was made to offer a sacrifice in which Hindu, Mussalman and Sikh blood mingled at Jallianwalla Bagh. They became one in death.

Since then much water has flowed under the Sabar-mati bridge. The nation has passed through many vicissitudes. To-day Hindu-Muslim unity seems to have been but a dream. I observe that both are preparing for a fight. Each claims that it is preparing in self-defence. Each is in a measure right. And if they must fight, let them fight bravely, disdaining the protection of the police or the law courts. If they will do that, the lesson of 13th April will not have been lost upon them. If we will cease to be slaves, we must cease to rely for protection upon the British bayonet or the slippery justice of law courts. Not to rely upon either at the crucial moment is the best training for *Swaraj*. The supersession of Sir Abdur Rahim, the passage of the Supplementary Ordinance, the restoration of the Salt Tax tell us in plainest language that the British rulers propose to rule in spite of our opposition. In fact, they tell us by their action as clearly as possible that they can and will rule without our assistance. Shall we not have the negative courage of doing without their assistance? We have seen that we can, when we do not quarrel. It is possible, if we have some courage, to do without that assistance even if we quarrel. It is any day better to stand erect with a broken and bandaged head than to crawl on one's belly, in order to be

able to save one's head. I can see Hindu-Muslim unity issuing out of our street fights without Government intervention. I should despair of real unity if we would fight under the shadow of the British Uniform and perjured evidence before British courts. We must be men before we would rule ourselves.

THE SCIENCE OF SURRENDER

“To surrender is not to confer favour. Justice that love gives is a surrender, justice that law gives is a punishment. What a lover gives transcends justice. And yet it is always less than he wishes to give because he is anxious to give more and frets that he has nothing left.”

Exception has been taken to my remarks at a meeting in Calcutta that Deshabandhu in his relations with the Mussalmans brought ‘the science of surrender to perfection.’ The exception has been taken because my critics impute to me the implication that by surrender I mean that Deshabandhu conferred on Mussalmans favours, that is, things they were not entitled to. The critics opine that the Hindus are acting towards the Mussalmans much the same as Englishmen are acting towards us all, having first taken away everything and then offering us doles in the name of favours.

I know what I said at the meeting in question. I have not read the reports of my speech, but I desire to abide by all I said at that meeting. I make bold to say that without mutual surrender there is no hope for this distraught country. Let us not be hyper-sensitive or devoid of imagination. To surrender is not to confer favour. Justice that love gives is a surrender, justice that law gives is a punishment. What a lover gives transcends justice. And yet it is always less than he wishes to give, because he is anxious to give more and frets that he has nothing left. It is libellous to say that Hindus act like Englishmen. Hindus cannot even if they would, and this I say in spite of the brutality of the labourers of Kidderpore. Both Hindus and Mussalmans sail in the same boat. Both are fallen. And they are in the position of lovers, have to be, whether they will or no. Every act, therefore, of a Hindu towards the Mussalman and *vice versa* must be an act of surrender

and not mere justice. They may not weigh their acts in golden scales and exact consideration. Each has to regard himself ever a debtor of the other. By justice, why should not a Mussalman kill a cow every day in front of me? But his love for me restrains him from so doing, and he goes out of his way sometimes even to refrain from eating beef for his love of me, and yet thinks that he has done only just what is right. Justice permits me to shout my music in the ear of Maulana Mahomed Ali when he is at prayer, but I go out of my way to anticipate his feelings and make my talks whispers whilst he is praying and still consider that I have conferred no favour on the Maulana. On the other hand, I should become a loathsome creature if I exercised my just right of playing tomtom precisely at the time of his prayer. Justice might have been satisfied if Deshabandhu Das had not filled certain posts with Mussalmans, but he went out of his way to anticipate Mussalman wishes and placate Mussalman sentiment. It was his sensitiveness to placate them that hastened his death. For I know what a shock it was to him to learn that law, *i.e.*, justice would compel him to disinter certain remains buried in unauthorized ground and he was trying to find out means of avoiding any the slightest offence to Muslim sentiment even though it may be unreasonable. This was going out of the way—not his way, but the way of the world. And yet he never considered that he was conferring any favour on the Mussalmans by delicately considering their feelings. Love never claims, it ever gives. Love ever suffers, never resents, never revenges itself.

This talk, therefore, of justice and nothing but justice is a thoughtless, angry and ignorant outburst whether it comes from Hindus or Mussalmans. So long as Hindus and Mussalmans continue to prate about justice, they will never come together. 'Might is right' is the last word of 'justice and nothing but justice.' Why should Englishmen surrender an inch of what they have earned by right of conquest? Or, why should Indians, when they come to power, not make the English disgorge everything which their ancestors robbed them of? And

yet when we come to a settlement, as we shall some day, we will not weigh in the scales of justice so-called, but we shall introduce into the calculation the disturbing factor of surrender otherwise called love or affection or fellow-feeling. And so will it be with us, Hindus and Mussalmans, when we have sufficiently broken one another's heads and spilled a few gallons of innocent blood and realized our foolishness. The scales will then fall off our eyes and we shall recognize that vengeance was not the law of friendship; not justice but surrender and nothing but surrender was the law of friendship. Hindus will have to learn to bear the sight of cow-slaughter, and the Mussalmans will have to discover that it was against the law of Islam to kill a cow in order to wound the susceptibilities of Hindus. When that happy day arrives, we shall know only each other's virtues. Our vices will not obtrude themselves upon our gaze. That day may be far off or it may be very near. I feel it coming soon. I shall work for that end and no other.

It is scarcely necessary for me to add by way of caution that my surrender does not mean surrender of principle. I made the point clear at the meeting and I wish to emphasize it here once more. But what we are just now fighting for is not any principle at all, but vanity and prejudice. We strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

A PLEA FOR TRUTH

"To be men we must shed cowardice whether we are Hindus or Mussalmans and learn the art of self-defence. No amount of hide and seek can avert the certain danger that awaits those who will not learn to defend themselves, although they would like to be defended by others."

I have not worried the readers of *Young India* with an account of the Kidderpore Hindu-Muslim riot on the Bakr-Id day, although I happened to be on the scene of the riot only a few hours after it had taken place. I did, however, give a long interview to the Associated Press almost after my return to Russa Road from Kidderpore. In the interview, I gave it as my deliberate opinion that the Hindu labourers were wholly in the wrong. This statement has enraged some of my Hindu correspondents who have favoured me with most abusive and offensive letters, protesting against my having found fault with the Hindus. One of them would have me adopt a Muslim name. I take notice of this correspondence in order to show to what pass some of us have come in our blind zeal for our respective faiths. We refuse to see anything wrong in ourselves. When such becomes the normal state of a majority of people belonging to a particular faith, that faith is dying. For, nothing based on a lie can persist for any length of time.

I venture to suggest that I have rendered a service to Hinduism by exposing without any reservation the wrong done by the Hindu labourers in question. They, the labourers themselves, did not resent my plain speaking. On the contrary, they seemed to be grateful for it. They felt penitent, admitted the wrong done, and sincerely apologized for it.

What was I to do, if I was not to speak out about what I saw with my own eyes and felt within me? Was I to prevaricate for the sake of protecting the guilty?

Was I to refuse to give the interview when the ubiquitous pressman sought me out at mid-night? I would have forfeited the right to call myself a Hindu, been unworthy of holding the office of President of the Congress and sullied my name as a *satyagrahi*, if I had hesitated to tell the truth when the telling of it had become relevant. Let Hindus not be guilty of the charge they do not hesitate to bring against Mussalmans viz., that of committing a wrong and then seeking to hide it.

One correspondent says when Hindus sought help in Delhi, I pleaded helplessness, when my presence is sought in Lucknow I evade it, but when it is matter of condemning Hindus, I hasten to the scene of action and thoughtlessly judge them. Let it be known that I went to Kidderpore on the strength of an invitation received from a Hindu on behalf of the Hindus, and upon a call from Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta who had preceded me. In spite of my helplessness, if I heard of an actual fight and especially if I found that I was wanted by either party, I should hasten to the rescue. It is when one party only calls me to adjust a quarrel or prevent it, I should plead helplessness because of loss of influence among a certain class of Hindus and Mussalmans. The difference between the two positions is too obvious to need pointing out.

But it is urged by the correspondents, as it was urged by a deputation that waited on me, that by my severe condemnation of the Hindus, I had encouraged the Mussalmans to commit assaults on innocent men and exposed the Bazar Hindu shop-keepers to looting and worse by Mussalman *goondas*. I should feel sorry if my condemnation of a Hindu misdeed should give rise to a Mussalman misdeed. But I could even then be not deterred from doing the right thing. And why should Hindus be afraid of Mussalman reprisals? Surely, it would be right for Hindus, if they cannot follow my method of non-violence and resignation—and I admit that it is most difficult for propertied men to do so—to defend themselves by every means at their disposal. To be men, we must shed cowardice, whether we are Hindus or Mussalmans,

and learn the art of self-defence. No amount of hide and seek can avert the certain danger that awaits those who will not learn to defend themselves, although they would like to be defended by others. My condemnation of Hindus of Kidderpore does not carry with it condemnation of those who defend themselves when attacked. Had the Hindus, instead of being the aggressors, been found defending themselves against heavy odds and had died in the attempt, I would have praised their valour. But at Kidderpore, so far as I know, they were in an overwhelming majority, they were the aggressors. The Mussalmans had given them no cause for quarrel. I would unhesitatingly condemn unprovoked violence, as I had no difficulty about condemning the Mussalman misdeeds in Kohat and Gulbarga which I thought were utterly uncalled for. I can even understand two blows against one, but I cannot reconcile myself to any blow without the slightest provocation or provocation worked up for the occasion.

HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

"It was manly enough to defend one's property, honour or religion at the point of sword. It was manlier and nobler to defend them without seeking to injure the wrong-doer. But it was unmanly, unnatural and dishonourable to forsake the post of duty, and in order to save one's skin, to leave property, honour or religion to the mercy of the wrong-doer."

At Bhagalpur, there was a very great public meeting at which I was obliged to make a somewhat lengthy reference to the Hindu-Muslim question. Though my influence over those who are agitating the question is gone, they continue to discuss with me the various problems arising from it. I felt, therefore, that I should re-declare my views for what they might be worth. Apart from merits, I must confess, that I have not liked this constant reference to the Government by both the parties on matters which they by mutual settlement or appeal to the sword can adjust. I, therefore, told the audience, that since neither party was prepared to compromise and each was afraid of the other, the best way would be without seeking the intervention of the Government to settle the matters in dispute by the method of the *lathi*. Retreat out of fear was cowardice, and cowardice would not hasten a settlement or the advent of non-violence. Cowardice was a species of violence which it was the most difficult to overcome. One could hope to persuade a violently inclined person to shed his violence and take up the superior force of non-violence, but since cowardice was a negation of all force, it was impossible to teach a mouse non-violence in respect of a cat. He would simply not understand what non-violence could be, because he had not the capacity for violence against the cat. Would it not be a mockery to ask a blind man not to look at ugly things? Maulana Shaukat Ali and I were at Bettia in 1921. The people of a village near Bettia told

me, that they had run away whilst the police were looting their houses and molesting their women-folk. When they said that they had run away because I had told them to be non-violent, I hung my head in shame. I assured them that such was not the meaning of my non-violence. I expected them to intercept the mightiest power that might be in the act of harming those who were under their protection, and draw without retaliation all harm upon their own heads even to the point of death, but never to run away from the storm centre. It was manly enough to defend one's property, honour or religion at the point of sword. It was manlier and nobler to defend them without seeking to injure the wrong-doer. But it was unmanly, unnatural and dishonourable to forsake the post of duty, and, in order to save one's skin, to leave property, honour or religion to the mercy of the wrong-doer. I could see my way of successfully delivering the message of *ahimsa* to those who knew how to die, not to those who were afraid of death. I told the audience further, that those like me, who deliberately did not want to fight and were powerless to effect a settlement, might follow the example of those Mussalmans, who during the time of the first four Caliphs sought the refuge of the cave when brothers began to fight one against the other. The mountain cave in these days was a practical impossibility, but they could retire to the cave which each of us carried within himself. But such could be only those who had mutual regard for one another's religion and customs.

THAT ETERNAL QUESTION

“Courts help those who are largely able to help themselves. Theirs is a supplementary protection. So long as there are weak people, so long will there be some one to prey upon their weakness. The remedy, therefore, lies in organizing for self-defence.”

However much I may wish to avoid it, the Hindu-Muslim question will not avoid me. Muslim friends insist upon my intervention to solve it. The Hindu friends would have me discuss it with them and some of them say I have sown the wind and must reap the whirlwind. Whilst I was in Calcutta, a Bihar friend had written to me in grief and anger telling me of the alleged kidnapping of Hindu boys and specially girls. I had written to him telling him point-blank that I did not believe those allegations, but that if he had proof and gave it to me I would gladly examine it and if I was satisfied I would denounce it, although I might not be able to do any tangible good. Since then I have had cuttings from newspapers describing in harrowing detail cases of kidnapping. I had told the friend that newspaper extracts could not be accepted as any evidence of the crime, that in many cases newspaper paragraphs were inflammatory, misleading and often absolutely false. There are Hindu and Muslim sheets that delight in blackguarding Mussalmans and Hindus respectively, and if both of them could be accepted as true, both the parties were loathsome creatures. But I have proved to my own satisfaction that many of these reported cases are highly exaggerated if they are not false. I have, therefore, asked for such incontestable proofs as would be accepted in any court of law. The Titagarh case is certainly such a one. A Hindu girl had been kidnapped. She is supposed to have embraced Islam and in spite of the court's order she has not been yet produced so far as I am aware. What is

more, respectable people are concerned in the non-production of the girl. When I was in Titagarh, nobody seemed prepared to shoulder the responsibility about the girl. At Patna, too, some startling information was given to me with corroborative evidence. I refrain at the present moment from going into it because it is not before me in its completed form. Such cases set one athinking and need the attention of all well-wishers of the country. There is, then, the question of music in front of mosques. I have heard of a peremptory demand for total cessation of music, soft or loud, at any time whatsoever in front of mosques. There is, too, a demand for the stopping of *arati* during prayer hours in temples in the neighbourhood of mosques. I heard in Calcutta that even boys passing by a mosque early in the morning and reciting *Ramnama* were stopped.

What is to be done? Recourse to law courts in such matters is a broken reed. If I allow my daughter to be kidnapped and then go to court for protection, the latter would be powerless; or, if the judge got angry over my cowardice he would dismiss me from his presence with deserved contempt. Courts deal with ordinary crimes. General kidnapping of girls or boys is not an ordinary crime. People in such cases are expected to look after themselves. Courts help those who are largely able to help themselves. Theirs is supplementary protection.¹

¹*Under the heading 'Who Should Protect?' Gandhiji wrote in Young India (Oct. 31, 1929) as follows:*

"An Assam correspondent writes "a fearful letter describing abductions of girls, married, unmarried and widowed, and he indignantly asks what measures are being taken to protect the honour of our women. He sends me newspaper cuttings in corroboration of his statement. It is possible, as I have been repeatedly told, that these cases are exaggerated, but whether they are or not, there is no doubt that abduction in well-organized society should be almost an impossibility. But I know that newspaper reporting can do very little in the way of securing protection for the girls who are in fear of being abducted. It is proof of rank cowardice on the part of relatives, friends and neighbours. A society that is unable to protect its women-folk is unfit to marry and procreate. Licentious men will satisfy their lust whenever and

So long as there are weak people, so long will there be some one to prey upon their weakness. The remedy, therefore, lies in organizing for self-defence. I could find it in me to justify the most violent defence in such cases, unless the people concerned are capable of a non-violent defence. No doubt where girls or boys of poor and helpless parents are kidnapped, the case becomes much more complicated. There the remedy has to be found not by the individual, but by a whole clan or caste. A presentation, however, of authentic cases of kidnapping is a prime necessity before public opinion can be well organized.

The question of music is much simpler than that of kidnapping. Either continuous music, *arati* or the repeating of *Ramnama* is a religious necessity or it is not. If it is a religious necessity, no prohibition order by a court of law can be held obligatory. Music must be played, *arati* must be made and *Ramnama* repeated, cost what it may. If my formula were accepted, a procession of the meekest men and women, unarmed even with *lathis*, would march with *Ramnama* on their lips, supposing that that was the bone of contention, and draw down on their heads the whole of the Mussalman wrath. But if they would not accept that formula, they would still proceed with the sacred name on their lips and fight every inch of the ground. But to stop music for fear of a row, or because of an order of court is to deny one's religion.

But, then, there is the other side to the question. Is continuous playing of music, even while passing mosques at prayer time, always a religious necessity? Is repeating of *Ramnama* a similar necessity? What about the charge that the fashion now-a-days is to organize processions purely for the sake of irritating Mussalmans and to make *arati* just at the time of prayer and to utter *Ramnama* not because it is held religiously necessary, but in order to create an occasion for a fight? If such be the case, it will

wherever they can with impunity. The only agitation that can or should be set up is to shame those who do not protect their women-folk into doing their duty."

defeat its own end and naturally the zest being wanting, a court's order, a military display or shower of brickbats would end the irreligious show.

A religious necessity must, therefore, be clearly established. Every semblance of irritation must be avoided. A mutual understanding should be sincerely sought. And where it is not possible an irreducible minimum should be fixed, making due allowance for the opposite sentiment, and, then, without seeking the intervention of courts, or in spite of a prohibition order, a fight must be put up for that minimum. Let no one charge me with ever having advised or encouraged weakness or surrender on matters of principle. But I have said, as I say again, that every trifle must not be dignified into a principle.

SHRADDHANANDJI—THE MARTYR

“Death is at any time blessed, but it is twice blessed for a warrior who dies for his cause, *i.e.*, truth.”

The expected has happened. Swami Shraddhanandji passed a day or two at the *Satyagraha Ashrama* at Sabar-mati, now about six months ago, and told me in the course of his conversations, that he often received letters threatening his life. Where is the reformer who has not a price put upon his head? There was, therefore, nothing untoward in his getting the letters. And there is nothing untoward in the assassination having taken place.

Swamiji was a reformer, he was a man of action, not of words. His was a living belief. He had suffered for it. He was bravery personified. He never quailed before danger. He was a warrior. And a warrior loves to die, not on a sick-bed, but on the battlefield.

Shraddhanandji became seriously ill about a month ago. Dr. Ansari was, as his physician, giving him all the loving attention he was capable of giving. The telegram I received from his son, Indra, in reply to my inquiry at the beginning of the month, was that he was better and that he wanted my ‘love and prayer’ both of which he had before the asking.

God had willed for him a martyr’s death and so, though he was still on the sick-bed, he died at the hands of an assassin who had asked to be admitted to the Swamiji’s presence for the purpose of holding a religious discourse on Islam, who was admitted at the Swamiji’s instance, and who, under pretence of wanting water to quench his thirst, had Swamiji’s faithful servant, Dharma Singh, sent out to fetch water, and who, in absence of the servant, deposited two death wounds in the patient’s breast, as he was lying in his bed. We have not the last

words of the Swamiji, but if I knew him at all, I have no doubt that he prayed to his God to forgive him who knew not that he was doing anything wrong. In the language of the Gita, therefore, 'happy the warrior who achieves such a blessed death.'

Death is at any time blessed, but it is twice blessed for a warrior who dies for his cause, *i.e.*, Truth. Death is no fiend, he is the truest of friends. He delivers us from agony. He helps us against ourselves. He ever gives us new chances, new hopes. He is like sleep a sweet restorer. Yet it is customary to mourn when a friend dies. The custom has no operation when the death is that of a martyr. I cannot, therefore, mourn over this death. He and his are to be envied. For, though Shraddhanandji is dead, he is yet living. He is living in a truer sense than when he moved about in our midst in his giant body. The family in which he was born, the nation to which he belonged are to be congratulated upon so glorious a death as this. He lived a hero. He has died a hero.

But there is another side to the shield. I regard myself as a friend of the Mussalmans. They are my blood-brothers. Their wrongs are my wrongs. I share their sorrows and their joys. Any evil deed done by a Mussalman hurts me just as much as that done by a Hindu. This foul deed has been done by one who bears a Mussalman name. As a friend of the Mussalmans, therefore, I deeply regret the event. The joy of the death is thus tempered by the sorrow that an erring, misguided brother has been the cause of it. Martyrdom can, therefore, never be wished for. It becomes a thing of joy only when it comes unsought. We may not gloat over the errors of the least of our fellows.

But the fact is that an error often refuses to become patent until it becomes atrocious. It dies only after being completely disgraced.

This tragedy has a national importance. It draws pointed attention to an evil that is eating into the vitals of the nation. Both Hindus and Mussalmans have the choice before them. We are both on our trial.

Hindus may, by being resentful, disgrace Hinduism and postpone the unity that must come. They can by self-restraint show themselves to be worthy of the message of the *Upanishads* and of Yudhishtira who was the embodiment of forgiveness. Let us not ascribe the crime of an individual to a whole community. Let us not harbour the spirit of retaliation. Let us not think of the wrong as done by a Mussalman against a Hindu, but of an erring brother against a hero.

Mussalmans have an ordeal to pass through. There can be no doubt that they are too free with the knife and the pistol. The sword is no emblem of Islam. But Islam was born in an environment where the sword was and still remains the supreme law. The message of Jesus has proved ineffective because the environment was unready to receive it. So with the message of the Prophet. The sword is yet too much in evidence among Mussalmans. It must be sheathed if Islam is to be what it means—peace. There is danger of Mussalmans secretly endorsing the mad deed. It will be a calamity for them and the world. For, ours is after all a world problem. Reliance upon the sword is wholly inconsistent with reliance upon God. There should be, on their part, unequivocal mass condemnation of the atrocity.

I wish to plead for Abdul Rashid. I do not know who he is? It does not matter to me what prompted the deed. The fault is ours. The newspaper man has become a walking plague. He spreads the contagion of lies and calumnies. He exhausts the foul vocabulary of his dialect, and injects his virus into the unsuspecting, and often receptive minds of his readers. Leaders 'intoxicated with the exuberance of their own language' have not known to put a curb upon their tongues or pens. Secret and insidious propaganda has done its dark and horrible work unchecked and unabashed. It is, therefore, we the educated and the semi-educated class, that are responsible for the hot fever which possessed Abdul Rashid.

It is unnecessary to discriminate and apportion the blame between the rival parties. Where both are to

blame, who can arbitrate with golden scales and fix the exact ratio of blame? It is no part of self-defence to tell lies or exaggerate.

It is too much to hope, but Swamiji was great enough to warrant the hope that his blood may wash us of our guilt, cleanse our hearts and cement these two mighty divisions of the human family.

I must deal with the life of Swamiji as I knew him, in the next issue of *Young India*.

SWAMIJI—AS I KNEW HIM

“Progress of liberal study of religions of the world is bound to revolutionize the existing clumsy method of proselytizing which looks to the form rather than the substance.”

After describing his first acquaintance with Swamiji and paying him a rich tribute for his manifold activities in social, educational and political spheres, Gandhiji wrote :

He has been severely criticized and maligned in the Mussalman Press for his *Shuddhi* movement. I myself could not accept his stand-point. I do not accept it even now. But, in my opinion, he had a complete defence of his own position from his own stand-point. *Shuddhi* is entitled to the same toleration that is claimed for *Tabligh*, so long as either remains within moral and legitimate bounds. But this is not the occasion for entering into an examination of that highly controversial question. Both the *Tabligh* and the *Shuddhi*, which is a reply to the former, have to undergo a radical change. Progress of liberal study of religions of the world is bound to revolutionize the existing clumsy method of proselytizing which looks to the form rather than the substance. It is the transference of allegiance from one fold to another and the mutual decrying of rival faiths which gives rise to mutual hatred.

Swamiji's assassination can be turned to good account by us, if we, both Hindus and Mussalmans, could possibly realize the deeper meaning of *Shuddhi*.

I cannot close the reminiscences of the life of a great reformer without recalling his last visit to the *Satyagraha Ashrama* only a few months ago. Let me assure my Mussalman friends that he was no hater of Mussalmans. He undoubtedly distrusted many Mussalmans. But he bore them no ill-will. He thought that Hindus were cowed down and he wanted them to be brave and be

able to defend themselves and their honour. In this connection he told me that he was much misunderstood and that he was absolutely innocent of many things that were said against him. He told me he had several threatening letters. He was warned by friends not to travel alone. But this man of faith said: 'What protection shall I seek but of God? Not a blade of grass perishes without His will. I know, therefore, that nothing can happen to me so long He wishes me to serve through this body.'

During this stay of his he spoke to the boys and girls of the *ashrama* school. He said the best protection of Hinduism must come from within, from self-purification. He put the greatest emphasis on the need of *brahmacharya* for the building of character and body.

HERO AMONG HEROES

“If we change our hearts we shall be able to see that Swamiji has served us in his death as much as he served us when living. Let us purify our hearts with his blood, and fight, if need be, for our rights in a peaceful and *satyagrahi* way.”

The following is a free translation of Gandhiji's Hindi speech with which he moved the resolution on the death of Swami Shradhdhanandji at the Gaubati session of the Indian National Congress :

You must have noticed that the resolution I have moved originally stood in Maulana Mahomed Ali's name. But I am here to move it in obedience to the President's summons. We see from the newspapers that the assassination of Swamiji has evoked grief and horror throughout the land. I said, speaking on the same subject at the All-India Congress Committee, that we should not mourn over the Swamiji's death. He had died the death of a hero, and every one of us might wish for such a death. But I want to make a slight correction in that last statement. Every brave man welcomes such a death whenever it comes to him. He greets it as a friend. But let no one, therefore, invite or hanker after such a death, let no one desire that some one else should be in the wrong and err against God and man, so that he might become a martyr. It is wrong to wish any one to go astray. Let us all be brave enough to die the death of a martyr, but let no one lust for martyrdom.

Swamiji was hero among heroes, the bravest of the brave. He had astonished the nation with an unbroken record of bravery. I am witness of the pledge he had taken to sacrifice himself at the altar of the country.

But need any one speak at length on the Swamiji's services to the nation? Swamiji, as every one knew, was the help of the helpless, the friend of the weak and the

oppressed, and the work he had done for the untouchables was unsurpassed. I well remember his having told me once that unless every Hindu member of the All-India Congress Committee had an 'untouchable' servant in his home, the work of the Congress for the uplift of the untouchables would not be complete. This may sound as an impracticable proposal, but it shows his unbounded love for the untouchables.

I shall not refer here to his many other services. Whilst the assassination of such a great hero and patriot, such a servant and devotee of God as the Swamiji, can be made to serve the country's cause, imperfect men as we are, it is natural for us to mourn over his sad death. And when one thinks of the circumstances under which he met his death, one is naturally filled with horror and indignation. The assassin sought an interview with the Swamiji to have a discussion on Islam. His faithful servant refused to admit him as he had Dr. Ansari's orders to allow no interviews so long as Swamiji was seriously ailing. But God had evidently ordered otherwise. Swamiji, when he overheard the request, asked Dharma Singh to let the man in. Brother Abdul Rashid was shown in. I purposely call him brother, and if we are true Hindus you will understand why I call him so. Swamiji asked his servant to admit Abdul Rashid, because God had willed to show there-through the greatness of Swamiji and the glory of Hinduism. Swamiji was, of course, too ill to discuss religious topics and he asked the stranger to seek another occasion. But he would not go. He said he was thirsty and asked for water. Swamiji asked Dharma Singh to fetch water for him and taking the advantage of his absence, the man deposited bullet shots in Swamiji's breast.

This is a thing which should not have happened in India—India, where both Hindus and Mussalmans are proud of their faiths. I have studied the Quran with the same reverent attention as I give the Gita, and I say that the Quran nowhere sanctions or enjoins such murders. The murder has been possible because the two communities look upon each other with feelings of hatred and

enmity. Many Mussalmans believe that Lalaji and Malaviyaji are the sworn enemies of Islam, as was Swamiji in their opinion. On the other hand, many Hindus regard Sir Abdur Rahim and other Mussalmans as the enemies of Hinduism. To my mind, both are wholly wrong. Swamiji was no enemy of Islam, nor are Lalaji¹ and Malaviyaji. Lalaji and Malaviyaji have a right to express their opinion freely, and even if we disagree with them no one may excite feelings of hatred against them. And yet what do we see to-day? There are few Mussalman papers to-day which do not use foul language against these patriots. Now I ask, in all humility, what is the wrong they have done? We may not see eye to eye with them in their methods of work. But I am sure that it is his great service that has earned for Malaviyaji the name Bharata Bhushan. Lalaji, too, has a great record of service. Then, take the Mussalman leaders. Sir Abdur Rahim may think that Hindus are in advance of the Mussalmans in every respect, that they are rich, they are educated, and the Mussalmans are poor and uneducated. Sir Abdur Rahim thinks that his community should have a preference in the services. It is open to us to feel and say that he is mistaken in his views, but why should we abuse him for his opinions? If Maulana Mahomed Ali says that although he has respect for Gandhi, he holds that the faith of a Muslim who believes in the Quran is greater than the faith of Gandhi, why should we be angry? Do not some Christian clergymen say that a Christian regularly going to church and serving Jesus is better than

¹ *In an article entitled 'Long Live Lalaji' (Young India, Nov. 22, 1928) after paying a glowing tribute to the departed leader, Gandbiji wrote:*

"With all deference to my Mussalman friends, I assert that he was no enemy of Islam. His desire to strengthen and purify Hinduism must not be confounded with hatred of Mussalmans or Islam. He was sincerely desirous of promoting and achieving Hindu-Muslim unity. He wanted not *Hindu Raj*, but he passionately wanted *Indian Raj*; he wanted all who called themselves Indians to have absolute equality. I wish that Lalaji's death would teach us to trust one another. And we could easily do this if we could but shed fear."

a Hindu, however pious he may be? What does that matter to us? I, therefore, appeal to you that if you hold dear the memory of Swami Shraddhanandji you would help in purging the atmosphere of mutual hatred and calumny, you would help in boycotting papers which foment hatred and spread misrepresentation. I am sure that India would lose nothing if 90% of the papers were to cease to-day. Many Mussalman papers to-day subsist on hatred of the Hindu, and many Hindu papers subsist on hatred of the Mussalman. Swamiji has left for us a rich lesson written in his blood.

'Do you know the liberality of the Arya Samaj?' he once asked me. 'Do you know how Maharshi Dayanand forgave the man who poisoned him?' I knew it. How could I be ignorant of it knowing as I did that the Maharshi had before him the example of Yudhishtira and the teaching of the Gita and the *Upanishads*? But Shraddhanandji in his overflowing reverence for the Maharshi dilated upon his forgiveness. I tell you the disciple had no less of that noble quality than his great master. Speaking once about the implications of *Shuddhi* he told me that his *Shuddhi* excluded any feeling of ill-will for the Mussalman, that it meant purification of self and the great community to which he belonged, and that his ideal was the ideal of the Gita—'See thyself in every one of the created beings.' But he emphasized that the Hindu also was no less a friend of his than the Mussalman, and that it was his duty to serve him. Even if the whole Muslim world were to turn against me, I would declare that Malaviyaji is my friend and elder brother. I declare also in the same breath that none of the Mussalman leaders is an enemy of Hinduism. Sir Abdur Rahim is not an enemy of the Hindus, nor is Mian Fazl-i-Hussain. When I met him, he assured me that he was an old Congressman, that he loved the Hindus no less than the Mussalmans, but that as a Mussalman he wanted to serve the latter. We may disagree with him in his views, we may not like his demands for the Mussalmans, but why should we, therefore, swear at him and say that he is an enemy of the Hindus? Why should we not express our

dissent from his views and fight them, if necessary, even as I do with Malaviyaji, in many respects, in a *satyagrahi* way? I repeat, therefore, with all the emphasis I can command that Sir Abdur Rahim or Mr. Jinnah, or the Ali Brothers are no enemies of the Hindus. Let not the lesson of Swami Shraddhanandji's death be lost on us. You will all be accepting this resolution standing, while at this moment, perhaps, there are Hindu-Muslim disturbances going on in Delhi. But I tell you that if every one of you understands and lays to his heart the lesson that Swami Shraddhanandji has left for us, it is again possible to win *Swaraj* in no time. I am a mad man, you will say, accustomed to giving rash promises. Well, I tell you I am not mad, I am still as much in earnest about my programme as I was in 1920, but those who made pledges in 1920 broke them and made *Swaraj* impossible then. We are all children of the same Father—whom the Hindu and the Mussalman and the Christian know by different names. What if Shankara declared his faith in one God in his formula *Ekamevâdvitiam*, or Ramanuja in his dual doctrine or Mahomed in his *La Ilaha Illillaha*? All meant one and the same thing. If we cleanse our hearts we shall be able to see that Swamiji has served us in his death as much as he served us when living. Let us purify our hearts with his blood, and fight, if need be, for our rights in a peaceful and *satyagrahi* way. Let every Mussalman also understand that Swami Shraddhanandji was no enemy of Islam, that his was a pure and unsullied life, and that he has left for us all the lesson of peace written in his blood.

Now, you will, perhaps, understand why I have called Abdul Rashid a brother, and I repeat it. I do not even regard him as guilty of Swami's murder. Guilty, indeed, are all those who excited feelings of hatred against one another. For us Hindus, the Gita enjoins on us the lesson of equality, we are to cherish the same feelings towards a learned Brahman, as towards a *Chandala*, a dog, a cow and an elephant.

This is no occasion for mourning or tears, it is an occasion that should burn on our hearts the lesson of

bravery. Bravery is not the exclusive quality of the Kshatriyas. It may be their special privilege. But in our battle for *Swaraj*, bravery is essential as much for the Brahman and the Vaishya and the Shudra as for the Kshatriya. Let us not, therefore, shed tears of sorrow, but chasten our hearts and steel them with some of the fire and faith that were Shraddhanandji's.

SHRADDHANAND MEMORIAL

"I am against conversion, whether it is known as *Shuddhi* by Hindus, *Tabligh* by Mussalmans or proselytization by Christians. Conversion is a heart-process, known only to and by God. It must be left to itself."

It is in the fitness of things that there should be an appeal on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha for funds to perpetuate the memory of the late Swami Shraddhanandji. I congratulate the Sabha on having decided upon inviting collections for carrying on the work for which the Swami-ji chiefly lived after his *sannyasa*. This was removal of untouchability, *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan*. The appeal has been made for five lakhs for untouchability and as many for *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan*. For my own part, I still remain unconvinced about the necessity of the *Shuddhi* movement, taking *Shuddhi* in the sense it is generally understood. *Shuddhi* of sinners is a perpetual inward performance. *Shuddhi* of those who can be identified neither as Hindus nor as Mussalmans or who have been recently declared converts but who do not know even the meaning of conversion and who want to be known definitely as Hindus, is not conversion but *prayashchitta* or penance. The third aspect of *Shuddhi* is conversion properly so-called. And I question its use in this age of growing toleration and enlightenment. I am against conversion, whether it is known as *Shuddhi* by Hindus, *Tabligh* by Mussalmans or proselytization by Christians. Conversion is a heart-process, known only to and by God. It must be left to itself. But this is no place for airing my views on conversion. Those who believe in it have a perfect right to follow their own course without let or hindrance, so long as it is kept within proper limits *i.e.*, so long as there is no force, no fraud nor material inducement, and so long as the parties are free agents and of

mature age and understanding. Those, therefore, who believe in *Shuddhi* have a perfect right to subscribe to the appeal.

Sangathan is really a sound movement. Every community is entitled, indeed bound, to organize itself if it is to live as a separate entity. I have kept myself aloof from it because of my peculiar ideas of organization. I believe in quality rather than quantity. The fashion now-a-days is to rely upon quantity even at the cost of quality. Quantity has its place, no doubt, in social and political economy. Only I am ill-fitted for organizing quantity in the way it is done at present. Therefore, for me the appeal only for funds for the removal of untouchability has a value. It comes with a force all its own. For reform of Hinduism and for its real protection, removal of untouchability is the greatest thing. It is all-inclusive, and, therefore, if this, the blackest spot on Hinduism is removed, you have automatically all that *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* can be expected to yield. And I say this, not because of the vast number of untouchables whom every Hindu should seek to embrace as one of his own, but because consciousness of having broken down a barbarous and ancient custom and consequent purity it necessarily implies, gives a strength which is irresistible. Removal of untouchability, therefore, is a spiritual process.

A CANDID CRITIC

"Bluster is no religion, nor is vast learning stored in capacious brains. The seat of religion is in the heart. We Hindus, Christians, Mussalmans and others have to write the interpretation of our respective faiths with our own crimson blood and not otherwise."

I must not withhold the following letter from the readers :

"I have perused your article *Shraddhanandji—The Martyr* with the care and reverence it deserves. I have read it five times before attempting to criticize it. This is to avoid hasty criticism.

"The article is undoubtedly written in fascinating language. I envy your style. It attracts, but to me it appears that it is rather dangerously attractive.

"My criticism is based on my estimation of your character. I have often debated with some friends on this subject. They hold that you are a statesman in the garb of a saint, ready to forego truth in the cause of your country. I have, on the contrary, maintained that you are a saint—who has entered politics in fulfilment of your mission, to practise truth in the face of most trying and perplexing circumstances. I shall be very obliged to know if my estimation is correct. For, if it is not, the criticism that follows has little value. I am of the opinion that a man of policy is within his rights to write in the manner you have done.

"You will agree with me that to suppress truth is a form of falsehood; to refuse to call a spade a spade when you feel it like that is cowardice; and that fearlessness and truth go together.

"Do you feel, Mahatmaji, that the murder of Swamiji was an inhuman, barbarous and cruel act of a Muslim ruffian and that the entire Muslim community should be ashamed of it? Why do you refuse to characterize it as such? Instead of condemning the deed and the doer and those who are responsible for this act (those who describe Hindu leaders as *Kaffirs*—the hot Muslim propagandists and the mad Muslim priests), you have begun to defend the murderer and hold an apology for the community. You never defended Dyer. Is not a European a brother, too?

"You say further, Islam means peace. Is this truth? Islam as taught by the Quran and practised by Muslims ever since its birth never meant peace. What makes you write a thing so patently

wrong? Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, of course, teach peace, but not Islam. May I know what makes you think and write like this?

"You never minced matters when condemning the wrongs of the Government, you never minced matters when you condemned Arya Samaj, why fear to condemn Muslims for even proved wrongs?"

"I am sure that, if such a black act had been committed by a Hindu against a Muslim leader (which Heaven forbid), you would have condemned the murderer and the community in unsparing terms. You would have asked Hindus to repent in sack-cloth and ashes, to offer fasts, hold *hartal*, raise memorial to the departed Muslim and many other things. Why do you accord preferential treatment to your 'blood-brothers'—the Muslims?"

"A truth-teller knows no fear, not even of the sword of Islam, and I trust you will oblige me by giving reply to above in the columns of your esteemed weekly."

The writer is frank and obviously in earnest and reflects the prevalent mood.

To clothe me with sainthood is too early, even if it is possible. I myself do not feel a saint in any shape or form. But I do feel I am a votary of Truth in spite of all my errors of unconscious omission and commission. The correspondent has judged rightly that I am not "a statesman in the garb of a saint." But since Truth is the highest wisdom, sometimes my acts appear to be consistent with the highest statesmanship. But I hope I have no policy in me save the policy of truth and *ahimsa*. I will not sacrifice truth and *ahimsa* even for the deliverance of my country or religion. This is as much as to say that neither can be so delivered.

In writing about the assassination of Swamiji, I have not suppressed truth. I do believe the act to be all that the correspondent describes. But I feel pity for the murderer even as I felt for General Dyer. Let not the correspondent forget that I refused to be party to any agitation for the prosecution of General Dyer. I do claim that a European is just as much brother to me as a Mussalman Indian or a Hindu.

What I do feel about the assassin is that he is himself a victim of foul irreligious propaganda in the name of

religion. Hence it is that I have held the newspapers that have corrupted the public mind to be responsible for the murder. I do hold the *Maulvis* and all those who have indulged in exciting hatred against Swamiji to be responsible.

But I do regard Islam to be a religion of peace in the same sense as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism are. No doubt there are differences in degree, but the object of these religions is peace. I know the passages that can be quoted from the Quran to the contrary. But so is it possible to quote passages from the *Vedas* to the contrary? What is the meaning of imprecations pronounced against the Anaryas? Of course, these passages bear to-day a different meaning, but at one time they did wear a dreadful aspect. What is the meaning of the treatment of untouchables by us Hindus? Let not the pot call the kettle black. The fact is that we are all growing. I have given my opinion that the followers of Islam are too free with the sword. But that is not due to the teaching of the Quran. That is due, in my opinion, to the environment in which Islam was born. Christianity has a bloody record against it, not because Jesus was found wanting, but because the environment in which it spread was not responsive to his lofty teaching.

These two, Christianity and Islam, are, after all, religions of but yesterday. They are yet in the course of being interpreted. I reject the claim of *Maulvis* to give a final interpretation to the message of Mahomed, as I reject that of the Christian clergy to give a final interpretation to the message of Jesus. Both are being interpreted in the lives of those who are living these messages in silence and in perfect self-dedication. Bluster is no religion, nor is vast learning stored in capacious brains. The seat of religion is in the heart. We Hindus, Christians, Mussalmans and others have to write the interpretation of our respective faiths with our own crimson blood and not otherwise.

‘RANGILA RASUL’

“To stop anti-Muslim writings like the *Rangila Rasul* is the work of the Hindus, as to stop anti-Hindu writings is the work of the Mussalmans. The leaders have either lost control over mud-flingers, or are in sympathy with them. In any case, Government protection will not make us tolerant of one another.”

In spite of the goading of correspondents, wise and otherwise, I have hitherto resisted the temptation to be drawn into the controversy that has arisen over this pamphlet. I have endeavoured patiently to deal with these correspondents by private correspondence. But, of late, the correspondence has increased beyond my capacity to deal with it privately. The last letter is from a Muslim professor in Bihar. He sends me a newspaper cutting containing a letter rebuking me in that even I had chosen to join in the conspiracy of silence observed by the leading Hindus in general. The professor wants me to ‘reply sharp.’ I gladly do so in the hope that my correspondents will be satisfied with my good faith and understand the reason for my silence. As I do not read newspapers, save a local one, I know nothing about the ‘conspiracy of silence’ by Hindu leaders. The newspaper I read most frequently just now is *The Hindu* and I do remember having seen in it a strong article against *Rangila Rasul*. So far as I am concerned, long before many Mussalmans knew even of the existence of the pamphlet, it came into my possession. In order to test the veracity of my informant, I read it and wrote the following note in *Young India*, dated 19th June, 1924 :

INFLAMMATORY LITERATURE

“A friend has sent me a pamphlet called *Rangila Rasul*, written in Urdu. The author’s name is not given. It is published by the Manager, Arya Pustakalya, Lahore. The very title is highly

offensive. The contents are in keeping with the title. I cannot, without giving offence to the reader's sense of the fine, give the translation of some of the extracts. I have asked myself what the motive possibly could be in writing or printing such a book except to inflame passions. Abuse and caricature of the Prophet cannot wean a Mussalman from his faith, and it can do no good to a Hindu who may have doubts about his own belief. As a contribution, therefore, to the religious propaganda work, it has no value whatsoever. The harm it can do is obvious.

"Another friend sends me a sheet called *Shaitan* printed at Public Printing Press, Lahore. It contains untranslatable abuse of Mussalmans. I am aware of similar abuse by Mussalman sheets. But that is no answer to or justification for the Hindu or the Arya Samaj abuse. I would not have even noticed these prints but for the information given to me that such writings command a fair patronage. The local leaders must find a way of stopping these publications or at least discrediting them and distributing clean literature instead, showing tolerance for each other's faiths."

Then followed protests from Arya Samajists enclosing viler writing against Arya Samajists and the great founder Rishi Dayanand, telling me that *Rangila Rasul* and such writings were in answer to the Muslim writings referred to above. I thereupon wrote the following second note (*Young India*, 10th July, 1924):

"My remarks on the unreadable pamphlet on the Prophet and on the scurrilous sheet *Shaitan* have brought me a sheaf-full of letters from Arya Samajists, who, whilst admitting the force and truth of my remarks, say that some Mussalman sheets are no better, and that they began the abuse and the Arya Samajists followed by way of retaliation. The writers have sent me some of these sheets. I have suffered the pain of going through a few of the extracts. The language in some parts is simply revolting. I cannot disfigure these pages by reproducing it. I have also been favoured with a life by a Mussalman of Swami Dayanand. I am sorry to say it is largely a distortion of the great reformer. Nothing that he did has escaped the author's venom. One of my correspondents complains bitterly that my remarks have emboldened the Mussalman speakers and writers to become more abusive than before towards the Arya Samaj and the Samajists. One of them sends me an account of a recently held Lahore meeting where unmentionable abuse was heaped upon the Samaj. Needless to say, such writings and speeches can have no sympathy from me. In spite of the opinion I have expressed, I claim to be one of the many humble admirers of the founder of the Samaj. He pointed out the many abuses that were corrupting Hindu

society. He inculcated a taste for Sanskrit learning. He challenged superstitious beliefs. By the chastity of his own life he raised the tone of the society in which he lived. He taught fearlessness, and he gave a new hope to many a despairing youth. Nor am I oblivious of his many services to the national cause. The Samaj has supplied it with many true and self-sacrificing workers. It has encouraged education among Hindu girls as perhaps no other Hindu institution save the Brahma Samaj has done. Ignorant critics have not hesitated to insinuate that my remarks about Shraddhanandji were due to his criticism of me. But the insinuation does not prevent me from re-acknowledging the pioneer work done by him in Gurukul. Whilst, therefore, I am unable to withdraw a single word of my criticism of the Samaj, the *Satyartha Prakash*, Rishi Dayanand and Swami Shraddhanandji, I repeat that my criticism was that of a friend with the desire that the Samaj may render greater service by ridding itself of the shortcomings to which I drew attention. I want it to march with the time, give up the polemical spirit, and whilst adhering to its own opinions, extend that toleration to other faiths which it claims for itself. I want it to keep a watch on its workers and stop all discreditable writings.

“It is no answer in justification that Mussalmans commenced the campaign of calumny. I do not know whether they did or not. But I do know that they would have been tired of repetition if there had been no retaliation. I have not even urged the Samajists to give up their *Shuddhi*. But I do urge them, as I would urge Mussalmans, to revise the present idea of *Shuddhi*.

“To the Mussalman writers and speakers, of whose conduct I have received the letters referred to, I venture to point out, that they neither enhance their own reputation nor that of the religion they profess by unrestrained abuse of the opponent. They can gain nothing, they cannot serve Islam, by swearing at the Samaj and the Samajists.”

Thus, I had anticipated the Mussalman wrath. But in the present agitation the meeting-point ends there. I could not approve of the turn the agitation took. I regarded it as excessive and inflammatory. The attack against Justice Duleepsingh was uncalled for, undeserved and hysterical. The judiciary is by no means above being influenced by the Government, but it would be wholly unfit to render justice if it was open to popular attacks, threats and insults. So far as the Judge's integrity was concerned, it should have satisfied any Mussalman that he condemned the pamphlet, as he did, in

unmeasured terms. His reading of the section ought not to have been made a cause for virulent attack against him. That other judges have taken a different view from Justice Duleepsingh is irrelevant to the issue. Judges have been often known before now to have given honest and opposite interpretations of the same law. The agitation for strengthening the penal section may be wise. Personally I question the wisdom. Any stiffening of the section will react against ourselves, and will be utilized, as such sections have been utilized before, for strengthening the hold of British authority over our necks. But if Mussalmans or Hindus want to agitate for unequivocally bringing such writings under the criminal law, they have a right to do so.

I hold strong views about Government protection. Time was when we knew better and disdained the protection of law courts in such matters. To stop anti-Muslim writings like the *Rangila Rasul* is the work of Hindus, as to stop anti-Hindu writings is the work of Mussalmans. The leaders have either lost control over mud-fingers or are in sympathy with them. In any case, Government protection will not make us tolerant of one another. Each hater of the other's religion will, under a stiffer law, seek secret channels of making vicious attacks on his opponents' religion, or writing vilely enough to provoke anger but veiled enough to avoid the penal clauses of the law. But, then, I recognize that at the present moment we are not acting as sane nationalists or as men of religion. We are seeking under cover of religion to wreak mad vengeance upon one another.

My correspondents, both Hindu and Mussalman, should understand that I am just now out of tune with the prevailing atmosphere. I recognize fully that I have no power over the fighters whether Hindu or Muslim. My solution for removing the tension is, I admit, not suited to the times. I, therefore, best serve the nation by holding my peace. But my faith in my solution is as immovable as my faith in the necessity and the possibility of real Hindu-Muslim unity. Though,

therefore, my helplessness is patent, there is no hopelessness in me. And as I believe that silent prayer is often mightier than any overt act, in my helplessness I continuously pray in the faith that the prayer of a pure heart never goes unanswered. And with all the strength at my command, I try to become a pure instrument for acceptable prayer.

A VICIOUS BOOK

“If my testimony is worth anything, I can say that the book is bound to hurt every Arya Samajist and every Hindu, indeed, every impartial man and woman not excluding Mussalmans. If a tree may be judged by its fruit, then this book is a fruit of spite.”

Three correspondents have written to me urging me to give my opinion on a book called *Swami Dayanand—A Critical Study of His Life and Teachings*, by F. K. Durrani, B.A., Muslim missionary. The author is the Secretary of Tabligh Literature Society, Lahore. A fourth correspondent has given me a copy of the book. One of them reminds me that I had no hesitation about expressing my opinion on *Rangila Rasul* and tells me that, therefore, I should have none in giving it on Mr. Durrani's volume. I have gone through the volume with as much patience as I could command and I have come to the conclusion that it is vicious, libellous book which should never have been written by a responsible man and published by a responsible society. The author protests in his preface that he will approach his subject in a scientific and dispassionate spirit. But he breaks that promise in the preface itself. He says: ‘We intend neither to praise nor to condemn.’ But in the very next page this is what he has to say on *Satyartha Prakash*. It ‘is a worthless book and the teachings and ideas contained in it are so absurd and so amusingly childish that one finds it hard to believe that a man, who became the founder of such a powerful organization as the Arya Samaj, could be the author of such drivel.’ The author has not hesitated to accuse the great reformer of falsehood, trickery, incapacity and addiction to *bhang* ‘whose narcotic juice often kept him insensate.’ ‘The account of his life left by himself is pure fiction.’ ‘A pall of mystery hangs over his origin and early years.’ He has

not one good word to say of the Swamiji or the Arya Samaj. He has gone out of his way even to abuse Hindus and Hinduism. But I may not multiply proofs. Almost every page of the book furnishes ample ground for condemning it. The author lets the cat out of the bag in his concluding chapter. He says: 'If we love our Motherland, if we want to make India a great and a civilized country, it is our duty to wash it clean of the stains of ancient superstitions of Hinduism and reach out the healing of Islam to every child of the Motherland..... Islam is a conquering force and the Muslims were born to freedom and empire. Both can come to us if we exert ourselves to expand our numerical strength. We are the children of the soil of India and we owe a duty to the Motherland. Like other lands, she, too, should have a place of equality in the comity of nations. Hindu India will never be able to do that. She can be free and rise to power and glory only under the banner of Islam.' And this cherished desire of his the author has sought to fulfil by dipping his pen in venom and reviling one of the greatest reformers of modern times, his writings and the great and growing sect of Arya Samaj and, incidentally, Hindus and Hinduism. I advise Mr. Durani to reconsider his views, apologize for the libellous publication and withdraw it. This advice I venture to tender because in a public letter he says: "If anyone can prove that the book has been written out of spite and to hurt, hereby I promise to withdraw even the present edition and will not bring it into the market. I have greater fear of my own conscience than of my Government, and my conscience is clear in this matter." If my testimony is worth anything, I can say that the book is bound to hurt every Arya Samajist and every Hindu, indeed, every impartial man and woman not excluding Mussalmans. If a tree may be judged by its fruit, then this book is a fruit of spite.

‘IN THE HANDS OF GOD’

“Although we are sons and daughters of the same Motherland, although we eat the same food, we have no room for one another. Let us ask God in all humility to give us sense, to give us wisdom.”

In the course of his speech at a public meeting held in the Mahesh Prangan at Comilla, Gandhiji said:

I dare not touch the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. It has passed out of human hands, and has been transferred to God's hands alone. Even as Draupadi, forsaken by her husbands, forsaken by men and gods alike, asked God and God alone to come to her help, and God gave her unfailing help, so it is with me and so should it be with every one of us. Let us ask for help from God—the All-Powerful, and tell Him that we His tiny creatures have failed to do what we ought to do, we hate one another, we distrust one another, we fly at one another's throat and we even become assassins. Let our hearts' cry, then, ascend to His throne, and let us wash His feet with tears of blood and ask Him to purge our hearts of all hatred in us. We are disgracing His earth, His name and this sacred land by distrusting and fearing one another. Although we are sons and daughters of the same Motherland, although we eat the same food, we have no room for one another. Let us ask God in all humility to give us sense, to give us wisdom.

PRAYER—THE ONLY WAY

“Something within me tells me that Hindu-Muslim unity must come and will come sooner than we might dare to hope, that God will one day force it on us, in spite of ourselves.”

Asked at Sewan (Bihar) to say something on Hindu-Muslim unity, Gandhiji delivered a Hindi speech of which the following is a condensed summary:

I am glad you say that your sub-division is better than other parts so far as Hindu-Muslim unity is concerned. But can you say that you are so united that your unity will stand the strain of anything happening elsewhere? I wish there can be at least one province, one district, one sub-division in this vast land which can proudly say that no power on earth can foment a Hindu-Muslim quarrel there. We may think we are living, but disunited we are worse than dead. The Hindu thinks that in quarrelling with Mussalman he is benefiting Hinduism, and the Mussalman thinks that in fighting a Hindu he is benefiting Islam. But each is ruining his faith. And the poison has spread among the members of the communities themselves. And no wonder. For one man cannot do right in one department. Life is one indivisible whole.

I said at Comilla that the problem has passed out of human hands, and that God has taken it into His own. Maybe, the statement springs from my egotism. But I do not think so. I have ample reason for it. With my hand on my breast I can say that not a minute in my life am I forgetful of God. For over twenty years I have been doing everything that I have done as in the presence of God. Hindu-Muslim unity I had made a mission of my life. I worked for it in South Africa, I toiled for it here, I did penance for it, but God was not satisfied; God did not want me to take any credit for the

work. And so I have now washed my hands. I am helpless. I have exhausted all my effort. But as I am a believer in God, as I never for a moment lose faith in Him, as I content myself with the joy and sorrow that He wills for me, I may feel helpless, but I never lose hope. Something within me tells me that Hindu-Muslim unity must come and will come sooner than we might dare to hope, that God will one day force it on us, in spite of ourselves. That is why I said, that it has passed into the hands of God. This, I said, might be taken to be an arrogant utterance—arrogant, inasmuch as it implies that it is not in the power of any other man to achieve the work, as if no one has worked for it more than I. But there is no arrogance in the statement. Hundreds may have done the work, with the same earnestness, love and energy, but none with more. And I believe that all of them must be feeling as helpless as I. In 1920, I said that not even the British Empire with all the resources of its armed strength, diplomacy and organization could efface us, make us slaves, or divide Hindus from Mussalmans. But that was because I thought we were god-fearing then. We trusted one another and we relied on one another's strength. But how am I to prevail upon you to-day to cast off all fear, hatred and distrust? Shraddhanandji was not the enemy of Mussalmans. He was a warrior, he had the courage of his conviction. Assassination was not the way to fight him. Let us Hindus and Mussalmans both wash the sins of our heart with his blood.

And what is it that we should be fighting for? We Hindus may be idol-worshippers. We may be mistaken. But when God gave every man the right to make mistakes, when God suffers us to live although we are idol-worshippers, why should not the Mussalmans suffer us, too? And if a Mussalman thinks that he must slaughter the cow, why should a Hindu stay his hands by force? Why should he not fall on bended knees before him and plead with him? But we will do no such thing. Well, then, God will one day make the Mussalman and the Hindu do what we will not do to-day. If you are belie-

vers, I beseech you to retire into yourselves and pray to the Indweller to stay your hands from wrong and make them to do the right thing. Let that be our prayer every morning and evening. There is no other way.

YOUNGMEN'S QUESTIONS

"My joy is in the fulfilment of my duty and the confidence that when some day the Mussalmans join hands with the Hindus in protecting the cow, everyone will say that the good result is due to the efforts of that mad Gandhi who died working for the cause."

Following are some of the questions which a few youngmen asked Gandhiji at Nasik and to which he replied at a public meeting:

Q. Are you partial to the Mussalmans? Why don't you answer the charges some of the Mussalman leaders level against you?

A. I can do justice to people of other faiths by appearing to be partial to them, and I know that I am protecting my own faith by showing, if you will, a reasoned partiality for other faiths. I do not, I cannot, wish to harm the Hindu religion, for I am after all a drop in the ocean of Hinduism. If Mussalmans call me *Kaffir*, what then? What can be the answer to it? In South Africa, a nephew of mine was staying with me. It was only when people said that I was partial to him, that he realized, and I realized, that I was only just to him. The fact that the Mussalmans are finding fault with me, possibly suggests that I am not yet sufficiently partial to them to convince them that I am just to them. Why should I answer their charges? All my twenty-four hours are consecrated to the service of Lord Krishna who is ever with me, who guides my footsteps, and whom I always pray to do whatever is needed for me. He will answer for me, if there be any need.

Q. If you fought for the *Khilafat*, why not do you fight for the Hindu *Sangathan* to-day?

A. The question is well asked. I had pledged myself to lay down my life for the *Khilafat* and I knew that I

was indirectly helping thereby the cause of the cow. 'How much cow-protection have you achieved?'—you will ask. Very little, I admit. But what does that matter to me? To work you have the right and duty, and not to the fruit thereof, says Gita. It was at the bidding of the Lord that I offered my co-operation to Ali Brothers, and rendered whatever help I could. I have never had reason to regret it. I would do the same thing should another occasion arise. That is the teaching of all our religious books. Let the people rail at me, insult me if they like. I am not going to pay them in their coin. Mine is the religion of *tapascharya*, the way of penance, taught by the scriptures and by Tulsidas. That is the law of my being and I cannot do otherwise. 'The whole creation,' says the Gita, 'follows the law of its being. How will restraint, then, avail?' My joy is in the fulfilment of my duty and the confidence that when some day the Mussalmans join hands with the Hindus in protecting the cow, everyone will say that the good result is due to the efforts of that mad Gandhi who died working for the cause.

In my opinion, there is no sanction in Hinduism, Islam or Christianity for the *Shuddhi*, *Tabligh* or proselytization respectively, as it is going on to-day. How, then, can I take part in the *Shuddhi*? The Gita and the *Tulsi Ramayana* teach me to resort to self-purification whenever I am or my religion is in danger. And what is true for me is true for all. That process of self-purification I am going through all the twenty-four hours of my days. Parvati, Narada had foretold, would have a ominous looking husband. She knew that only Shiva was as blissful as he was ominous looking, and she performed penance for winning Shiva and won him. So the lesson of penance and self-purification is writ large everywhere in our scriptures and the Himalayas are the living witness to it—the Himalayas where countless *Rishis* ground their bodies to dust for self-purification. The *Vedas*, to me, are not the texts writ on paper, but my very conscience and the Indweller. They tell me to observe *yama* and *niyama* (the cardinal and the casual vir-

tues) and trust everything to Lord Krishna. In all humility, I claim that all my work is conducive to the service of Hinduism. As a Hindu, I could do nothing else. The way of doing it is, of course, my own.

Q. What is the extent of the help you are getting from the Mussalmans during this tour?

A. I admit that in my *Khadi* work I have been having not much help from them. But what does that matter? I do not bargain with my brother or wife in my domestic affairs. I do my duty and leave the rest to do theirs. In the same way, I will not bargain with the Mussalmans, as I will not with Pandit Motilalji or Kelkar. Why should we fear the Mussalmans? We need fear only God and no man. Even if men should play you false, do not be deterred from doing your duty, in the confidence that God will take care of you.

THE SHOLAPUR SPEECH

"It is my unshakable conviction that penance and self-purification are the only means for the protection of Hinduism. Do any amount of *Sangathan*, only let not that *Sangathan* be of the evil forces, let it be only of the forces of good."

Replying to the criticism made in an open letter addressed to him by some people from the town that while he was good enough, his work had ruined the country, Gandhiji said :

I am but an erring mortal and like any one of you I am full of shortcomings; therefore, I beseech you to reject them and simply make the best of my capacity for service. Turn my good points to account and reject the bad ones. If you do not pick and choose and simply reject me wholesale, what will the world say to you? Will you regret the service of a man as a carrier because he is blind?

As I said at Nasik, I fail to understand the *Shuddhi*, *Tabligh* and proselytization as they are carried on to-day. I cannot understand a man changing the religion of his forefathers at the instance of another. But that is my personal conviction. No one need stop *Shuddhi*, *Tabligh* or proselytization at my instance. My own duty is clear. I must go on purifying myself and hoping that only thereby would I react on my surroundings. It is my unshakable conviction that penance and self-purification are the only means for the protection of Hinduism. Do any amount of *Sangathan*, only let not that *Sangathan* be of the evil forces, let it be only of the forces of good.

You say I am partial to the Mussalmans. So be it, though the Mussalmans do not admit it. But my religion will not suffer by even an iota by reason of my partiality. I shall have to answer my God and Maker, if I give any one less than his due, but I am sure that He will bless me if He knows that I gave some one more than his due.

I ask you to understand me. If my hand or heart has done anything more than was anyone's due, you should be proud of it, rather than deplore it. It should be a matter of pride to you as Hindus to think that there was amongst you at least one mad Gandhi who was not only just to the Mussalmans, but even went out of his way in giving them more than their due. Hinduism is replete with instances of tolerance, sacrifice and forgiveness. Think of the sacrifice of the Pandavas, think of the forgiveness of Yudhishtira. Should it be a matter for sorrow for you, that there is at least one man who has tried to carry out the precept of Hinduism to the letter?

THE GULBARGA SPEECH

“If there were men who devoted all their time and energy to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity, I at least was one of them; but when my efforts did not seem to bear any fruit, I threw myself on God.”

In the course of his speech turning to the Hindu-Muslim question, Gandhiji said:

Much as I would like to pour out my agony before you, I know that it will be a cry in the wilderness. I, therefore, daily send out my prayer to God: ‘Lord, do somehow deliver us from this conflagration.’ But I should be untrue to my creed if, as a believing and *satya-grahi* Hindu, I disguised from you the feelings within me. When I went into the temple, I was shown the spot where the idol was removed and the *Nandi* was desecrated. I tell you the sight pained me. You may call me an idolator, if you will. I see God everywhere and in everything. I tell you God would never approve of those acts of desecration. Whilst in Yeravada jail, I read Maulana Shibli’s life of the Prophet, I also read *Usya-e-Sahaba* and can say that those who did the acts were wrong, that Islam never sanctions such things and they were guilty before God and man. When I heard of these things, I was convinced that the matter had passed out of human hands. If there were men who devoted all their time and energy to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity, I at least was one of them; but when my efforts did not seem to bear any fruit, I threw myself on God. When the saints and god-fearing people of Islam saw that there was discord and strife after the passing away of the Prophet, they dissociated themselves from them, migrated to Egypt, Persia and other lands and there retired into seclusion and sent up their prayers to God. It is these saints that have kept Islam alive. How often have I wished to retire thus

into seclusion! And though I know that history will take note of my efforts as those of one who was a servant of God, who committed Himalayan blunders but who had also the courage to confess them and repent for them. I know that to-day I can do no better than be silent on this question.

THE RATNAGIRI SPEECH

“It is unthinkable that a man will become good or attain salvation only if he embraces a particular religion,—Hinduism Christianity or Islam. Purity of character and salvation depend on the purity of heart.”

After dwelling at length on the Charkha as a remedy for India's poverty, Gandhiji said :

But some one comes and says : ‘When Mussalmans are converting us, who is going to listen to your *Khadi*?’ Have you, I ask, become so impotent that you will be Mussalmans because some one compels you to embrace Islam? If you have true *dharma* in you, no one dare violate it. But I want to protect even our *dharma* by means of *Khadi*. For *Khadi* means the service not only of Hindu but of Mussalman women. A *Maulvi* in Bengal went and asked some of those women not to spin on the ground that the *Khadi* movement was a Hindu movement. They listened to him for a couple of days, but the third day they came asking for cotton. For what could they do? They could not go on starving and the *Maulvi* had no food to offer them. The learned author of the *Mahabharata* has described Vishvamitra, the sage, as ready to eat what was forbidden to him and even to steal, when he was oppressed by the pangs of hunger. One cannot say what a hungry man or woman would not stoop to. I, therefore, tell you that you must take to *Khadi* if only to alleviate the poverty and safeguard the honour of your women.

I am asked to take part in the *Shuddhi* movement. How can I, when I wish that its Muslim and Christian counterparts should also cease? It is unthinkable that a man will become good or attain salvation only if he embraces a particular religion—Hinduism, Christianity or Islam. Purity of character and salvation depend on the

purity of heart. I, therefore, say to the Hindus : 'Do whatever you like, but don't ask a man like me, who has come to his conclusions after the maturest thinking, to take up what he cannot.' Man's capacity is after all limited. I can do what is within my power, not what is beyond it. I cannot do a hundred or even half a dozen things at a time. I would think myself blessed even if I can do one thing well at a time. If you agree with me that the *Charakha* is the best *Sangathan* that is possible, give me as much help as you can render.

TO MY NUMEROUS MUSLIM FRIENDS

“Surely, conversion is a matter between man and his Maker who alone knows His creatures’ hearts. And conversion without a clean heart is, in my opinion, a denial of God and religion.”

The newspapers report that about a fortnight ago, my eldest son Harilal, now nearing fifty years, accepted Islam and that on Friday last 29th May, in the midst of a large congregation in the Juma Musjid at Bombay, he was permitted to announce his acceptance amid great acclamation and that after his speech was finished, he was besieged by his admirers who vied with one another to shake hands with him. If his acceptance was from the heart and free from any worldly considerations, I should have no quarrel. For, I believe Islam to be as true a religion as my own.

But I have the gravest doubt about this acceptance being from the heart or free from selfish considerations. Every one who knows my son Harilal, knows that he has been for years addicted to the drink evil and has been in the habit of visiting houses of ill-fame. For some years he has been living on the charity of friends who have helped him unstintingly. He is indebted to some Pathans from whom he had borrowed on heavy interest. Up to only recently he was in dread of his life from his Pathan creditors in Bombay. Now he is the hero of the hour in that city. He had a most devoted wife who always forgave his many sins, including his unfaithfulness. He has three grown-up children, two daughters and one son, whom he ceased to support long ago.

Not many weeks ago, he wrote to the Press complaining against Hindus—not Hinduism—and threatening to go over to Christianity or Islam. The language of the letter showed quite clearly that he would go over

to the highest bidder. That letter had the desired effect. Through the good offices of a Hindu councillor, he got a job in Nagpur Municipality. And he came out with another letter to the Press, recalling the first and declaring emphatic adherence to his ancestral faith.

But, as events have proved, his pecuniary ambition was not satisfied and in order to satisfy that ambition, he has embraced Islam. There are other facts which are known to me and which strengthen my inference.

When I was in Nagpur in April last, he had come to see me and his mother and he told me how he was amused by the attentions that were being paid to him by the missionaries of rival faiths. God can work wonders. He has been known to have changed the stoniest hearts and turned sinners into saints, as it were, in a moment. Nothing will please me better than to find that during the Nagpur meeting and the Friday announcement, he had repented of the past and had suddenly become a changed man having shed the drink habit and sexual lust.

But the Press reports give no such evidence. He still delights in sensation and in good living. If he had changed, he would have written to me to gladden my heart. All my children have had the greatest freedom of thought and action. They have been taught to regard all religions with the same respect that they paid to their own. Harilal knew that if he had told me that he had found the key to a right life and peace in Islam, I would have put no obstacle in his path. But no one of us, including his son now twenty-four years old and who is with me, knew anything about the event till we saw the announcement in the Press.

My views on Islam are well known to the Mussalman who are reported to have enthused over my son's profession. A brotherhood of Islam has telegraphed to me thus: "Expect like your son you truth-seeker to embrace Islam truest religion of world."

I must confess that all this has hurt me. I sense no religious spirit behind this demonstration. I feel that those who are responsible for Harilal's acceptance of Islam did not take the most ordinary precautions they

ought to have in a case of this kind.

Harilal's apostacy is no loss to Hinduism and his admission to Islam is a source of weakness to it if, as I apprehend, he remains the same wreck that he was before.

Surely, conversion is a matter between man and his Maker who alone knows His creatures' hearts. And conversion without a clean heart is, in my opinion, a denial of God and religion. Conversion without cleanness of heart can only be a matter for sorrow, not joy, to a godly person.

My object in addressing these lines to my numerous Muslim friends is to ask them to examine Harilal in the light of his immediate past, and if they find that his conversion is a soulless matter, to tell him so plainly and disown him, and if they discover sincerity in him, to see that he is protected against temptations so that his sincerity results in his becoming a god-fearing member of society. Let them know that excessive indulgence has softened his brain and undermined the sense of right and wrong, truth and falsehood. I do not mind whether he is known as Abdulla or Harilal, if by adopting one name for the other, he becomes a true devotee of God which both the names mean.¹

¹A few days later on, in the course of a talk with a Polish research student at Sevagram on the question of conversion and the methods adopted by Christian missionaries to that end, Gandhiji inquired of him whether he had read what he had written on his son's so-called conversion to Islam and said :

"If he had become a Muslim from a pure and a contrite heart, I should have no quarrel with him. But those who had helped him to embrace Islam and are enthusing over his apostacy simply exploited his weaknesses. They are no true representatives of Islam. My letter to the Muslims, I tell you, was written with my pen dipped in my heart's blood."

PROPAGANDA BY VILIFICATION

"It is tragic to see that religion is dragged down to the low level of crude materialism to lure people into which the most cherished sentiments of millions of human beings are trodden under foot."

A correspondent sends me a proselytizing pamphlet, being a Gujarati version of the original in Urdu. The Gujarati translator and publisher is Sheikh Umarbhai Mohmedbhai and the pamphlet is printed in Ahmedabad. I take the following from the correspondent's letter :

"Permit me to send you a copy of a pamphlet published by a local Muslim, apparently with a view to induce Harijans for conversion to Islam and create hatred among them against Hindus. This pamphlet is full of such remarks about the Hindu religion and the Hindu rites as are not only false but are likely to intensify the communal tension.

"Recently, I have tried to save two boys of Upper India. They were found out and were sent back with their relatives who had come down in search of them. Even Harijan girls have recently been induced to adopt Islam.

"You will kindly go through this pamphlet and suggest the course to be adopted so that these poor and illiterate Harijan people may not be entrapped by such false and inflammatory pamphlets."

I had the pain of going through the pamphlet. It is as mischievous as it has been described by the correspondent. It is in the form of a dialogue between two Harijans, father and son. At the instance of the father, the son reads Hindu scriptures and ridicules them. Everything held sacred by Hindus is caricatured so as to excite disgust towards Hinduism and *Savarna* Hindus. Even the sacred name of Swami Shraddhanandji has been dragged in the discussion, and words have been put into his mouth which I hold him to be incapable of having uttered. Here is a sentence which no gentleman would write of his fellow-men : "Some Hindus sit in squares smeared

with cow-dung as if they were sitting to evacuate themselves. Cursed be such eaters." The pamphlet is full of distortions. And it holds out material hopes to Harijans which can hardly be fulfilled, especially about the mass of Harijans, if they are ever tempted to forsake their ancestral faith. Thus, the *Maulvi* who is responsible for the conversion of the Harijan son is represented to be a convert from being a *Chamar* and having married a girl belonging to a noble Muslim family. The new convert drinks from the same cup as the *Maulvi* and the remains of the water are drunk by the company. He is treated to a feast at a Munshi's palatial house. The feast fills the dining-hall with fragrance. "Every morsel was a nectar, every potion was the water of life," and this erstwhile Harijan is treated to the inhalation of a *hookah* which goes the round of the whole company.

It is tragic to see that religion is dragged down to the low level of crude materialism to lure people into which the most cherished sentiments of millions of human beings are trodden under foot.

I hope that the pamphlet has no support from thoughtful Mussalmans who should read it to realize the mischief such pamphlets can create.

My correspondent asks me how to deal with the menace. One remedy I have applied, *viz.*, to bring hereby the vilifying propaganda to the notice of the responsible Muslim world. He himself can claim the attention of the local Mussalman leaders to the publication. The second and the most important thing to do is purification from within. So long as the poison of untouchability remains in the Hindu body, it will be liable to attacks from outside. It will be proof against such attacks only when a solid and impregnable wall of purification is erected in the shape of complete removal of untouchability.

FOUR QUESTIONS

If a person, through fear, compulsion, starvation or for material gain or consideration, goes over to another faith, it is a misnomer to call it conversion. ... Real conversion springs from the heart and at the prompting of God, not of a stranger."

A correspondent asks the following four questions:

1. Hindus who once renounced their faith for some reason or other and joined Islam or Christianity, sincerely repent and want to come back. Should we re-convert them or not? You may take the instance of your own son Harilal.
2. Lakhs of the Depressed Class people in South India, as you know, have joined Christianity wholesale. Some of them, since the Travancore Durbar Declaration and the popularity of the Harijan movement, feel it worth while to re-adopt their ancestral faith. What would you advise about them?
3. A Hindu was made to join another faith for certain material considerations. After some time he feels disillusioned and comes and knocks at our door. Shall we welcome him or not?
4. Young Hindu boys and girls are often taken hold of by Christian missionaries and converted. At some places, Muslims are also making use of their orphanages for this purpose. What should we do, when these boys and girls, either alone or with their guardians, approach us for *Shuddhi*?

These, or such, questions have been asked and answered before now in these columns in some shape or other. I do not need to answer each separately. In my opinion, they are not examples of real heart conversions. If a person, through fear, compulsion, starvation or for material gain or consideration, goes over to another faith, it is a misnomer to call it conversion. Most cases of mass conversions, of which we have heard so much during the past two years, have been to my mind false coin. Real conversion springs from the heart and at the prompting of God, not of a stranger. The voice of God can

always be distinguished from the voice of man. The hypothetical cases coined by my correspondent are, so far as I can see, not cases of conversion. I would, therefore, unhesitatingly re-admit to the Hindu fold all such repentants without ado, certainly without any *Shuddhi*. *Shuddhi* is not applicable to such cases. And, as I believe in the equality of all the great religions of the earth, I regard no man as polluted because he has forsaken the branch on which he was sitting and gone over to another of the same tree. If he comes back to the original branch, he deserves to be welcomed and not told that he had committed a sin by reason of his having forsaken the family to which he belonged. In so far as he may be deemed to have erred, he has sufficiently purged himself of it when he repents of the error and retraces his step.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

“Differences we shall always have. But we must learn to settle them all, whether religious or other, by arbitration. Before the rulers we must be able to present a united front and demonstrate to the world our capacity for regulating our manners if we would have *Swaraj*.”

When the President of the Congress wired that a unanimous resolution on the Hindu-Muslim question was reached by the All-India Congress Committee, I could not enthuse over the information. The wire told me enough about the contents of the resolution. When the President paid me a visit at Nandi, he asked me whether I would write on it. I told him I did not think I could write anything helpful. A few days after the visit, I got a message from a friend. Its purport was: “You are responsible for the mischief that is going on in our midst. If you had not dragged the Hindus into the *Khilafat* agitation, the recent tragic events would not have happened. But you alone can now save us.”

In translating the message I have softened the bitterness of the language of the original. It seems to me to call for a reiteration of my belief about Hindu-Muslim unity.

I do not repent of my part in the *Khilafat* agitation. It was a duty I discharged towards my Mussalman countrymen. The Hindus would have been wrong, if they had not helped their brethren in their distress. However ugly the present look of things may be, future generations of Mussalmans will recall with gratitude this great act of friendship on the part of Hindus. But the future apart, as I believe in the proverb that virtue is its own reward, I, therefore, received the friend’s message of rebuke with perfect calmness.

But I wish I could fulfil his expectations and assist immediately and materially in bringing about peace.

For, I am just as strong a believer as ever in unity and the necessity for it. If it could be achieved by giving my life, I have the will to give it and I hope I have the strength for it. I should with the greatest joy undertake an indefinite fast, as I very nearly did at Delhi in 1924, if it would melt and change the stony hearts of Hindus and Mussalmans. But I have no sign from God within to undertake the penance. If a penance is itself an act of purification, it has also to be preceded by an equal measure of initial purification. I am obviously not pure enough for that supreme penance.

If the reader does not see me now often as referred to the question in these pages, it is because the sense of humiliation has gone too deep for words. It matters little to me whether the perpetrators of shameful deeds are Hindus or Mussalmans. It is enough to know that some of us are blaspheming a patient God and doing inhuman deeds in the sacred name of religion. I know, too, that neither assassination, nor fratricidal acts can possibly save religion. Religion worth the name can only be saved by purity, humility and fearlessness of the uttermost type among its professors. It is the only *Shuddhi* and only propaganda.

Hence has the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee left me unmoved. For I know that we have not yet changed our hearts. We have not shed fear of one another. Any compromise that is unaccompanied by these two conditions must be a mere make-shift.

Moreover, I feel that any agreement between the component parts of the nation must be voluntary and must remain so for all time. It must not, if it is conceived in terms of *Swaraj*, depend for its final ratification or enforcement upon a legal enactment. Ratification by our respective organizations must be held to be final and binding. Enforcement must depend on the honour of the leaders of respective parties and ultimately, in the absence of reliance on non-violence, on the arbitrament of civil war, fought decently or indecently as the case may be. It is a sign of weakness, not of fitness for *Swaraj*, to go to the foreign ruling power to arbitrate between us

or to enforce the peace between us at the point of the bayonet.

If we, the so-called leaders, have no control over our fighting elements, our agreement must be held to be unreal and useless. Before we think of real *Swaraj*, we must learn to behave ourselves. The agreement had no effect on Delhi, and to our eternal shame the Government has been the keeper of the peace on Bakr-Id.

My creed of non-violence is an extremely active force. It has no room for cowardice or even weakness. There is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward. I have, therefore, said more than once in these pages that if we do not know how to defend ourselves, our women and our places of worship by the force of suffering, *i.e.*, non-violence, we must, if we are men, be at least able to defend all these by fighting. It is unmanly to ask or expect the Government to ensure the peace between rival parties or to defend our women against ourselves. And while we remain so unmanly, it is hopeless to expect *Swaraj*. In well-ordered societies, Governments merely undertake the police work. But the recent elaborate preparations at Delhi or Lahore were no part of police work. Differences we shall always have. But we must learn to settle them all, whether religious or other, by arbitration. Before the rulers we must be able to present a united front and demonstrate to the world our capacity for regulating our own manners if we would have *Swaraj*.

If, however, we have no leaders whom we can elect as arbitrators who would give wise and impartial decisions, or, if we are too unruly and barbarous to wait for and abide by decisions of arbitrators of our choice, we must fight till we are exhausted and come to our senses. The Government will no doubt always intervene, whether we will or no, either to keep the public peace or to preserve its own safety. But it will weaken us the least, if the rival factions will courageously and straightforwardly refrain from courting the protection or assistance of Government. Why should a murderer in such warfare be defended? Let him seek the gallows. Let

breakers of places of worship come forth boldly and say : 'We have done this for the sake of religion, punish us if you like !' Let those who kill innocent passers-by deliver themselves to the police and say : 'We have done it all for God's sake !' All this may read heartless. But I have merely endeavoured to suggest a way that is straighter and less weak than the one we have hitherto adopted.

And if you cannot, after the manner of civilized men, resort to voluntary arbitration or, after the manner of brave barbarous races, fight out differences without seeking the intervention of British justice or bayonets, all we may expect to get in the shape of reforms is an increased agent's share in the bureaucratic Government; in other words, an increasing share in the exploitation of dumb millions. Let us take care that any agreement we may come to does not reduce us to that unenviable condition.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO ?

"With me the conviction is as strong as ever that willy-nilly Hindus and Mussalmans must be friends one day. No one can say how and when that will happen. The future is entirely in the hands of God. But He has vouchsafed to us the ship of Faith which alone can enable us to cross the ocean of Doubt."

Two weeks ago I wrote in *Navajivan* a note on the tragedy in Godhra, where Sjt. Purshottam Shah bravely met his death at the hands of his assailants and gave the note the heading *Hindu-Muslim Fight in Godhra*. Several Hindus did not like the heading and addressed angry letters asking me to correct it. I found it impossible to accede to their demand. Whether there is one victim or more, whether there is a free fight between the two communities, or whether one assumes the offensive and the other simply suffers, I should describe the event as a fight if the whole series of happenings were the result of a state of war between the two communities. Whether in Godhra or in other places, there is to-day a state of war between the two communities. Fortunately, the countryside is still free from the war fever which is mainly confined to towns and cities, where, in some form or other, fighting is continually going on. Even the correspondents who have written to me about Godhra do not seem to deny the fact that the happenings arose out of the communal antagonisms that existed there.

If the correspondents had simply addressed themselves to the heading, I should have satisfied myself with writing to them privately and written nothing in *Navajivan* about it. But there are other letters in which the correspondents have vented their ire on different counts. A volunteer from Ahmedabad who had been to Godhra writes:

"You say that you must be silent over these quarrels. Why were you not silent over the *Khilafat*, and why did you exhort us

to join the Muslims ? Why are you not silent about your principles of *ahimsa* ? How can you justify your silence when the two communities are running at each other's throat and the Hindus are being crushed to atoms ? How does *ahimsa* come there ? I invite your attention to two cases :

"A Hindu shopkeeper thus complained to me : 'Mussalmans purchase bags of rice from my shop, often never paying for them. I cannot insist on payment, for fear of their looting my godowns. I have, therefore, to make an involuntary gift of about 50 to 75 maunds of rice every month ?'

"Others complained : 'Mussalmans invade our quarters and insult our women in our presence, and we have to sit still. If we dare to raise a protest, we are done for. We dare not even lodge a complaint against them.'

"What would you advise in such cases ? How would you bring your *ahimsa* into play ? Or, even here would you prefer to remain silent ?"

These and similar questions have been answered in these pages over and over again, but as they are still being raised, I had better explain my views once more at the risk of repetition.

Ahimsa is not the way of the timid or the cowardly. It is the way of the brave ready to face death. He who perishes sword in hand is no doubt brave, but he who faces death without raising his little finger and without flinching is braver. But he who surrenders his rice bags for fear of being beaten is a coward and no votary of *ahimsa*. He is innocent of *ahimsa*. He, who for fear of being beaten, suffers the women of his household to be insulted, is not manly but just the reverse. He is fit neither to be a husband nor a father, nor a brother. Such people have no right to complain.

These cases have nothing to do with the inveterate enmity between Hindus and Mussalmans. Where there are fools there are bound to be knaves, where there are cowards there are bound to be bullies, whether they are Hindus or Mussalmans. Such cases used to happen even before the outbreak of these communal hostilities. The question here, therefore, is not how to teach one of the two communities a lesson or how to humanize it, but how to teach a coward to be brave.

If the thinking sections of both the communities

realized the cowardice and folly at the back of the hostilities, we can easily end them. Both have to be brave, both have to be wise. If both or either deliberately get wise, theirs will be the way of non-violence. If both fight and learn wisdom only by bitter experience, the way will be one of violence. Either way, there is no room for cowards in a society of men, *i.e.*, in a society which loves freedom. *Swaraj* is not for cowards.

It is idle, therefore, to denounce *ahimsa*, or to be angry with me on the strength of the cases cited. Ever since my experience of the distortion of *ahimsa* in Bettiah in 1921, I have been repeating over and over again that he, who cannot protect himself or his nearest and dearest of their honour by non-violently facing death, may and ought to do so by violently dealing with the oppressor. He who can do neither of the two is a burden. He has no business to be the head of a family. He must either hide himself, or must rest content to live for ever in helplessness and be prepared to crawl like a worm at the bidding of a bully.

I know only one way—the way of *ahimsa*. The way of *himsa* goes against my grain. I do not want to cultivate the power to inculcate *himsa*. As *ahimsa* has no place in the atmosphere of cowardice prevailing to-day, I must needs be reticent over the riots we hear of from day to day. This exhibition of my helplessness cannot be to my liking. But God never ordains that only things that we like should happen, and things that we do not like should not happen. In spite of the helplessness, the faith sustains me that He is the Help of the helpless, that He comes to one's succour only when one throws himself on His mercy. It is because of this faith that I cherish the hope that God will one day show me a path which I may confidently commend to the people. With me the conviction is as strong as ever that willy-nilly Hindus and Mussalmans must be friends one day. No one can say how and when that will happen. The future is entirely in the hands of God. But He has vouchsafed to us the ship of Faith which alone can enable us to cross the ocean of Doubt.

‘A YOUNG HEART’

“The heroism of *ahimsa* cannot be developed from cowardice. Bravery is essential to both *himsa* and *ahimsa*. In fact, it is even more essential in the latter, for *ahimsa* is nothing if it is not the acme of bravery.”

A correspondent who signs himself ‘A Young Heart’ has addressed me a long letter dealing with a number of subjects. This anxiety to keep the writer’s name secret betrays cowardice or lack of moral courage, alas, fast becoming but too common amongst us. It ill becomes those who aspire after *Swaraj*. I would appeal to our young men to shed this moral weakness and speak out their thoughts with courage and yet with humility and restraint. Even if they cannot be sure of their sense of discrimination and courtesy, let them express their thoughts in the language that comes to them naturally. Cowardly silence will not only not teach them discrimination or courtesy, but it will demoralize them into the bargain.

To come now to the questions adverted to by ‘A Young Heart’ in his letter.

The third question¹ adverted to by ‘A Young Heart’ is that of Hindu-Muslim unity. I cull the following sentences from his observations:

“Thinking that your efforts at establishing Hindu-Muslim unity have proved fruitless, you are sitting with your lips almost sealed in this matter. That does not seem to me to be right. You may keep your silence on the question of unity, but do not you think that it is your duty to ascertain facts whenever there is a communal disturbance, and after full consideration to express your opinion on merits? You may not take an active part, but how will it injure the interests of the country if, after giving an impartial hearing to both the sides, you frankly speak to whomso-

¹The first two questions being irrelevant are omitted.

ever might appear guilty in your eyes. The attitude that you have taken up with regard to the Godhra riot and Surat is, to be frank, hardly proper. Where is your valour gone now which you displayed abundantly on other occasions by calling a spade a spade? Good God! I am really surprised at this attitude of yours. I humbly ask you to advise the Hindus, if they cannot observe *ahimsa* as defined by you, to fight, in self-defence, those who assault or murder them and their dear ones without cause."

I have already explained my position in this matter. I trust it is not out of fear that I do not air my views on this subject now-a-days. But when it may be out of place for me to write or when I have not sufficient material to form an opinion or when the matter does not fall within my province, I consider it to be my duty to maintain silence. At present, neither of two parties is prepared to accept my solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem. There is, therefore, no occasion for me to express my opinion.

There remains the question of expressing opinion on the riots that have taken place or might take place in the future. When the subject itself, as I have already pointed out, has gone out of my province, there can be no question of my expressing an opinion on events that may arise. Again, if I proceed to express opinion on such matters before scrutinizing what both the parties might have to say on them, my conduct would be justly held to be improper and even impertinent. There would also be the danger of my misjudging. And how can I set out to make an inquiry into a question when I know that I have no ready solution for it?

Let no one, however, run away with the idea, from this, that I have washed my hands of this question for good. I am simply biding my time like an expert physician who has faith in his remedy. It is my firm belief that mine alone is the sovereign remedy for this seemingly incurable communal disease, and that in the end one or both the parties will willy-nilly accept my cure.

In the meantime, those who want will fight, in spite of whatever I might say. Nor do they need any prompting from me. This I have said repeatedly: I do not want any cowardice in our midst. The heroism of *ahimsa*

cannot be developed from cowardice. Bravery is essential to both *himsa* and *ahimsa*. In fact, it is even more essential in the latter, for *ahimsa* is nothing if it is not the acme of bravery.

COMMUNAL QUESTION

"I, for one, would welcome the Congress passing to Mussalman, Sikh, Parsi, Christian, Jewish hands rather than that it should be in any sense a sectional organization."

Commenting on the resolutions of the Lahore Congress, Gandhiji wrote as follows in connection with the one relating to the communal question:

Equally important is the communal resolution. Though it was adopted for the sake of the Sikhs, it was necessary otherwise, too, to enunciate the principle underlying it. Independent India cannot afford to have communal representation, and yet it must placate all communities if the rule of independence is not based on coercion of minorities. But the Congress has now to cultivate a spirit of common nationality and refuse to resort to camouflage or expedience in a matter so vital as the communal question. In the Congress, we must cease to be exclusive Hindus or Mussalmans or Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Jews. Whilst we may staunchly adhere to our respective faiths, we must be in the Congress Indians first and Indians last. A good Hindu or a good Mussalman should be a better Hindu or a better Mussalman for being a lover of his country. There never can be any conflict between the real interest of one's country and that of one's religion. Where there appears to be any, there is something wrong with one's religion, *i.e.*, one's morals. True religion means good thought and good conduct. True patriotism also means good thought and good conduct. To set up a comparison between two synonymous things is wrong. But if the Congress is ever forced to consider a solution based on communalism, the resolution binds it to reject any that does not satisfy the parties concerned. In order, however, that the Congress may never be faced

with a situation demanding a communal solution, it should now be joined in large numbers by Mussalmans, Sikhs and others who will have India as one indivisible nation. I, for one, would welcome the Congress passing to Mussalman, Sikh, Parsi, Christian, Jewish hands rather than that it should be in any sense a sectional organization. Any one who has the spirit of service in him can capture the Congress. It has the most democratic franchise. Its doors are ever open to those who would serve. Let all join it and make it a mighty instrument for gaining Complete Independence for the poorest, the weakest and the most down-trodden.

SOME QUESTIONS

"This unity among all is no new love with me. I have treasured it, acted up to it from my youth upward. Love so deep-seated as it is in me, will not be sacrificed even for the realm of the whole world."

Q. But what about your much vaunted faith in Hindu-Muslim unity? Of what value will even Independence be without that unity?

A. My faith in that unity is as bright as ever. I do not want Independence at the cost even of the weakest minority, let alone the powerful Mussalman and the no less powerful Sikh. The Lahore Congress resolution on unity finally sums up all its previous effort in that behalf. The Congress rules out all solutions proposed on a communal basis. But if it is ever compelled to consider such a solution, it will consider only that which will give (not merely justice) but satisfaction to all the parties concerned. To be true to its word, therefore, the Congress cannot accept any scheme of Independence that does not give satisfaction, so far as communal rights are concerned, to the parties concerned. The campaign that is about to be launched is calculated to generate power for the whole nation to be independent. But it will not be in fact, till all the parties have combined. To postpone civil disobedience, which has nothing to do with communalism, till the latter is set at rest, will be to move in a vicious circle and defeat the very end that all must have in view. What I am hoping is that the Congress being free from the communal incubus will tend it, if it remains true to the nation as a whole, to become the strongest centre party, jealously guarding the rights of the weakest members. Such a Congress will have only servants of the nation, not office-seekers. Till Independence is achieved or till unity is reached, it will

have nothing to do with any office or favours from the Government of the day in competition with the minorities. Happily, the Congress has now nothing to do with the legislatures which have, perhaps, more than anything else increased communal bitterness. It is no doubt unfortunate that at the present moment the Congress contains largely only the Hindu element. But if the Congress Hindus cease to think communally and will take no advantage that cannot be shared to the full with all the other communities, it will presently disarm all suspicion and will attract to itself the noblest among Mussalmans, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Jews and all those who are of India. But whether the Congress ever approaches this ideal or not, my course is, as it always has been, perfectly clear. This unity among all is no new love with me. I have treasured it, acted up to it from my youth upward. When I went to London as a mere lad in 1889, I believed in it as passionately as I do now. When I went to South Africa in 1893, I worked it out in every detail of my life. Love so deep-seated as it is in me, will not be sacrificed even for the realm of the whole world. Indeed, this campaign should take the attention of the nation off the communal problem and to rivet it on the things that are common to all Indians, no matter to what religion or sect they may belong.

WHAT IT IS NOT

"I can never be an enemy of Mussalmans, no matter what any one or more of them may do to me or mine, even as I can never be an enemy of Englishmen, even though they may heap further wrongs upon the Everest of wrongs their representatives have already piled."

Maulana Shaukat Ali is reported to have said that the Independence movement is a movement not for *Swaraj* but for Hindu *Raj* and against Mussalmans, that, therefore, the latter should leave it alone. On reading the report, I wired to the Maulana inquiring whether he was correctly reported. He has kindly replied confirming the report. The Maulana has launched a grave charge against the movement. It needs to be repudiated once for all. Whatever the movement is, it certainly is not for Hindu *Raj*, nor is it against Mussalmans. It bears within itself a complete answer to the charge. The Congress has taken the first step in final non-co-operation. No Congressman can enter the legislatures, much less accept employment under the Government. No Congressman can seek or receive favours from the Government. Does not the Hindu-Muslim question centre round a division of political power—spoils of office? How can the movement be anti-Mussalman or for Hindu *Raj* when no one identified with it has the slightest notion, till Independence is reached, of possessing any political power? True, the Congress has still left open the entrance to local boards. What is at present going on in Calcutta almost makes me think that instead of being weak, I should have pressed for the boycott even of these boards. The Congress is better without these temptations. They are just now mere snares for the unwary or the selfish, rather than instruments of national service for the patriot. But I am sure the Maulana did not have the local boards in mind when he said that the

movement was against Mussalmans. The only ground for the belief, in so far as I can fathom it, can be that those who are engaged in it, must by its very nature become more self-reliant, more defiant and more capable of resisting any encroachment on their liberty than before, and that since the vast majority of them are Hindus, they will in course of time become more powerful than the Mussalmans. But such reasoning would be unworthy of the brave Maulana I have known him to be. He must, therefore, explain to the public what he means by his serious charge.

I grant, that if till the end of the chapter only Hindus join the movement in the right spirit, they will become an irresistible force of the right, *i.e.*, non-violent type. But the obvious deduction from this fact is, that all those who are keeping aloof should join the movement at the earliest moment. And I prophesy that if the movement keeps the chalked path, the Maulana and the other Mussalmans, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jews etc. will join it.

Surely, all are equally interested in securing repeal of the Salt Tax. Do not all need and use salt equally? That is the one tax which is no respecter of persons.

Civil disobedience is a process of developing internal strength and, therefore, an organic growth. Resistance to the Salt Tax can hurt no single communal interest. On the contrary, it must, if successful, help the abstainers equally with the participants.

As against this absolutely national method of gaining our end, put the unnatural, artificial and diplomatic method of a Round Table Conference in which conflicting interests will be represented by interested parties, and all the Indian groups together will be moved and dominated by the paramount and all-powerful British group. This conference, without the power of the people behind it and composed of the powerful and the weak, will bring anything but *Swaraj*. In the existing circumstances, therefore, it can only result in further consolidating the British power.

Civil resisters can have nothing to do with such a

conference. Their business is merely to generate and conserve national strength. They have nothing to do with communalism. But if they are compelled by force of circumstances to countenance a communal solution, they are pledged only to consider such as may be satisfactory to the parties concerned. How the Maulana can call such a movement anti-Muslim or one for obtaining Hindu *Raj*, passes comprehension.

The fact that those taking part in the movement are preponderatingly Hindus is unfortunately true. By proclaiming a boycott, the Maulana is helping the process. Even so, there can be no harm, if the Hindu civil resisters are fighting not for themselves but for all—Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, and others who will make the nation of the future Free India.

Not much imagination is required to see that even when civil resisters have acquired sufficient influence to make themselves felt, it will still be open to any one at the time of framing a constitution to block the way. The only time, when abstainers, be they Mussalmans or Hindus or any other, will be helpless against the civil resisters is when they drive out the English or when the latter retire in a huff or in disgust. In the first place, however, they can never do this if their means are uniformly peaceful. Secondly, Mussalmans above all can help themselves and the nation by joining the struggle. Thirdly, if no violence on the part of the people is offered, civil resistance *must* result in complete conversion of the English. They will, then, consider it their duty, it will be their penance, to help us, at their own expense, to arrive at a solution of the many difficulties of which they will own themselves to have been the authors. They will help us as absolute equals and friends to inaugurate an independent, organized Government.

As for the irritation felt by the Maulana against me personally, I need not say much. Since I have no counter-irritation in me, I prophesy that when his temper has cooled down and when he discovers that I am not guilty of the many sins he imagines against me, he will restore me to 'his pocket' in which I had the honour to be only

the other day as it were. For, it is not I who have gone out of his pocket. He has thrown me out of it. I am the same little man that I used to be in 1921. I can never be an enemy of Mussalmans, no matter what any one or more of them may do to me or mine, even as I can never be an enemy of Englishmen, even though they may heap further wrongs upon the Everest of wrongs their representatives have already piled. I am too conscious of the imperfections of the species to which I belong to be irritated against any single member thereof. My remedy is to deal with the wrong wherever I see it, not to hurt the wrong-doer, even as I would not like to be hurt for the wrongs I continually do.

HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

“Civil resistance will merely give the power to the nation to assert her will. But when the time comes for its assertion, the document, embodying the will, will have to be sealed by all the communities. Thus, without the co-operation of all communities, there is no Independence.”

The following is a full summary of an important speech delivered by Gandhiji at Broach during the course of his famous Dandi March dealing with the communal question:

A Muslim youth has sent me questions on the Hindu-Muslim problem. One of them is:

‘Do you expect to win *Swaraj* through your own single effort or assisted merely by the Hindus?’

I have never dreamt that I could win *Swaraj* merely through my effort or assisted only by the Hindus. I stand in need of the assistance of Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians, Sikhs, Jews and all other Indians. I need the assistance even of Englishmen. But I know, too, that all this combined assistance is worthless if I have not one other assistance, that is from God. All is vain without His help. And if He is with this struggle, no other help is necessary.

But to realize His help and guidance in this struggle, I need your blessings, the blessings of all communities. The blessings of thousands of men and women belonging to all communities that have attended this March are to me a visible sign of the hand of God in this struggle.

I know that there are occasions when the hand of God has to be traced in the curses of men. But this is not such an occasion. To-day I am doing what the nation has been yearning for during the past ten years. Have I not been rebuked for delaying civil resistance? Have not friends angrily said: “You are stopping the progress

of the nation towards its goal? You have only to say: 'Let there be civil resistance, behold! there is *Swaraj*.'" There is some truth in the taunt. Full civil resistance does mean *Swaraj*. But I was staying my hand. I had no confidence in myself. I was straining my ear to listen to the still small voice within, but only up to yesterday there was no response. It was in Lahore, I had told a journalist that I saw nothing on the horizon to warrant civil resistance. But suddenly, as in a flash, I saw the light in the *Ashrama*. Self-confidence returned. Englishmen and some Indian critics have been warning me against the hazard. But the voice within is clear. I must put forth all my effort or retire altogether and for all time from public life. I feel that now is the time or it will be never.

And so I am out for battle and am seeking help on bended knee from this white beard (pointing to Sjt. Abbas Tayabji) as also the little girls. For, in this battle even they can help; and thank God, they are eager to do so. I have insistent letters from them demanding enlistment.

Thus, the answer to the Muslim youth's question is complete. I need the help of all races and from all climes.

A *satyagrahi* has no power he can call his own. All the power he may seem to possess is from and of God. He, therefore, moves towards his goal carrying the world's opinion with him. Without the help of God, he is lame, blind, groping.

Ever since 1921, I have been reiterating two words, —'Self-purification' and 'Self-sacrifice.' God will not assist him without these two. The world is touched by sacrifice. It does not, then, discriminate about the merits of a cause. Not so God. He is all-seeing. He insists on the purity of the cause and on adequate sacrifice therefor.

The question was put by a Mussalman, representing a powerful interest. But had a little Parsi girl representing but a hundred thousand Parsis asked the question, I should have given the same answer and said: 'Without

the help of Parsis there is no *Swaraj*.' I am thankful to be able to say that I have had during the March abundant proof of the blessings of these communities. I have read friendliness in the eyes and in the speech of the Mussalmans who along with the rest have lined our route or attended the meetings. They have even given material aid.

Yet, I know that I have not the Ali Brothers with me. Maulana Shaukat Ali will no longer have me in his pocket. Do not think, I do not miss him. I hold no distinction between him and blood-brother. His resistance, therefore, can only be short-lived. If truth is in me, the Brothers must capitulate. They cannot long keep out of the battle. I crave, too, the assistance of Englishmen. It was neither empty formula nor a touch of vanity that prompted me to send an English friend with my letter to the Viceroy. But choosing Reginald Reynolds as my messenger, I sealed the bond between them and me. For my enmity is not against them, it is against their rule. I seem to be born to be an instrument to compass the end of that rule. But if a hair of an English head was touched, I should feel the same grief as I should over such a mishap to my brother. I say to them as a friend: 'Why will you not understand that your rule is ruining this country? It has got to be destroyed even though you may pound us to powder or drown us. We must declare what we feel.'

The second question is :

'Under *Swaraj*, how many seats will Mussalmans have in the legislatures ?'

What answer can I return to such a question ? If I were Viceroy of India, I should say to the Mussalmans, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis etc.: 'Take what you like, the balance will go to the Hindus.' It is true that the *Sanatani* Hindu will never let me become Viceroy. The fact is that I am unfit to do such accounting. But it should be sufficient to know that the Congress has pledged itself not to accept any communal solution that does not satisfy the parties concerned. I am bound by that pledge. For

the Congress, all are one. They are all Indians and, therefore, their freedom is guaranteed. No more can be expected by any community.

Civil resistance will merely give the power to the nation to assert her will. But when the time comes for its assertion, the document, embodying the will, will have to be sealed by all the communities. Thus, without the co-operation of all communities, there is no Independence.

But what should we do meanwhile? We must, at least, be true to the salt we eat. Her starving millions are the salt of India's earth. To be true to them, we must free the salt from a tax which they have to pay equally with the rich and in the same proportion as the rich. In our ignorance we have been paying this inhuman imposition. Having realized our folly, we will be traitors to the starving millions, if we submit to the exaction any longer.

Who can help liking this poor-man's battle? The cruel tax is no respecter of persons. It is, therefore, as much the interest of the Mussalman as of the Hindu to secure its abolition. This is a fight undertaken in the name of God and for the sake of the millions of the paupers of this country.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"I have embarked upon civil disobedience without any reservation save that of non-violence, for the simple and peremptory reason that non-violence itself was in danger of being worsted in the fight. I could not possibly contemplate such a calamity with equanimity."

As so much misrepresentation is being made about my attitude on the communal question, without entering into any argument I would state my position as clearly as my knowledge of the language would enable me to do.

1. The views that I have held for the last 40 years remain unchanged.

2. I hold that there is no *Swaraj* without communal unity, as without several other things I have repeatedly mentioned.

3. The present campaign is not designed to establish Independence, but to arm the people with the power to do so.

4. When the power has been generated and the time has come for the establishment of Independence, Mussalmans and all other minorities will have to be placated. If they are not, there must inevitably be civil war. But I live in the hope that if we succeed in generating the power, our differences and distrust will vanish. These are due to our weakness. When we have the power from within, we shall shed our weakness.

5. The Nehru Constitution having lapsed, the communal solution has naturally lapsed. The Lahore Congress Resolution mentions in so many words that the communal solution not having given satisfaction either to the Sikhs or the Mussalmans, the question might have to be reconsidered so as to give satisfaction to all the parties concerned.

6. The only non-violent solution I know is for the Hindus to let the minority communities take what they like. I would not hesitate to let the minorities govern the country. This is no academic belief. The solution is attended with no risk. For under a free Government, the real power will be held by the people. That demonstration is being given now. The mightiest Government will be rendered absolutely impotent, if the people realizing their power use it in a disciplined manner and for the common good. In Gujarat, the people are within reach of success, if the strength and cohesion they are showing to-day are genuine and not derived from blind faith. It must be remembered that only an infinitesimal proportion of the people can hold positions of responsibility and power in a country's government. Experience all the world over shows that the real power and wealth are possessed by people outside the group that holds the reins of government. We in India hanker after power, because our people are ignorant and will be exploited. The power wielded to-day is corrupt to the core. Independence achieved through non-violent power must, by its very nature, reduce corruption to a minimum. It is thus my practical wisdom which has suggested the solution. The fact is that we are to-day unable to visualize anything contrary to our experience, present or inherited. Yet, what can be clearer than that an Independent India must be something quite outside our present experience. It is, of course, open to the critic to say that both non-violence and Independent India achieved through it exist only in my imagination. My retort, then, is that, God willing, I shall not be found surviving in an India that remains slave in spite of this struggle or under so-called Independence achieved through violent means. I admit that under an independence violently achieved, minorities have to take care of themselves. But this, thanks to the existing Government, they do not need much exertion to do. For, the Government exists by playing one community against the other or others. The difficulty of my critics arises from their ignoring or doubting my creed. I remain unmoved, because they won't be able long to ignore or

doubt my creed.

7. My so-called inconsistencies are no inconsistencies to those who understand, be it only intellectually, the implications of non-violence.

8. There can be nothing to suspect in resisting the Salt Tax or the drink and drug evil or the inroads of foreign cloth through *Khadi*. I, therefore, do not hesitate to invite all to take their due share in the campaign. Those who will not, simply deny to themselves the opportunity of gaining the power of resistance to evil under every conceivable circumstance.

9. I have embarked upon civil disobedience without any reservation save that of non-violence, for the simple and peremptory reason that non-violence itself was in danger of being worsted in the fight. I could not possibly contemplate such a calamity with equanimity. I saw at once that if non-violence was a potent force, it must be able to make its way even through violence and finally supersede it.

DELHI SPEECH

"I am sick of these squabbles for seats, this scramble for the shadow of power. How I wish I could bring home to all Congressmen that they should have nothing to do with these legislatures?"

Addressing a huge mass meeting at Delhi soon after the conclusion of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Gandhiji said:

Before I begin, I must tell you how much I miss Maulana Shaukat Ali here. He arrived this morning and it is a matter of inexpressible sorrow to me that he should not be here, and I have no doubt you also will share my sorrow. But I may assure you that I shall miss no opportunity, leave no stone unturned, to persuade the Maulana and other Mussalmans to work with us on the same platform. It is a matter for shame that the 'Big Brother' with whom I travelled through the country for over two years, and whom I took particular pleasure in describing as capable of carrying me in his pocket, should not be here with me to-day. But if it is a matter for shame, I do not know how far I am responsible for it. I have spared no effort to remove that shame, but I have not succeeded. In this there is nothing surprising, inasmuch as we find even blood-brothers divided by sharp differences of opinion. But our differences have not, in the least, affected our friendship. I regard him, even to-day, as my friend and brother, and I have no doubt that he also has the same regard for me. But that affords me little consolation, for I want him to work shoulder to shoulder with me for the welfare of India, and I want his co-operation on my terms, as, indeed, he once used to give me. But that work ceased to appeal to him at a certain stage and he left the Congress platform.

That preamble will give you an inkling of what I am about to say to-day. The settlement that has been just

arrived at¹ will fail of effect without a real heart-unity between Hindus and Mussalmans. Without that unity our going to the Conference² will be of no avail. No one will pretend that the Conference can help us to achieve that unity. A heart-unity can be achieved between pure hearts purged of distrust, and that can be achieved only outside the Conference. In this I seek your co-operation and ask you to count on my doing my utmost.

In a letter, I received yesterday, the correspondent asks me why I should not make the same advances to the Mussalmans as I did to the Viceroy. Why, he asks, should I not wait on esteemed Mussalman friends who are desirous of unity and beg on bended knees for their co-operation? I like the suggestion and the correspondent may be sure that I shall leave nothing undone to plead with my Mussalman friends. But you must understand that there are limits to the capacity of an individual, and the moment he flatters himself that he can undertake all tasks, God is there to humble his pride. For myself, I am gifted with enough humility to look even to babes and sucklings for help. And that reminds me that in this mission of mine, I can count on the hearty and active co-operation of my sisters who beat all previous records of suffering and sacrifice during the last heroic campaign. To them I say: 'If you are convinced that Hindu-Muslim unity is a *sine qua non*, I ask you to use against your own countrymen the same weapon of *satyagraha* that you used so effectively against Government. Tell your men that you will non-co-operate with them, you will not cook for them, you will starve yourselves and them so long as they do not wash their hands of these dirty communal squabbles. Assure me of your co-operation, and you will add tremendously to my strength and to my power of pleading.'

We, Hindus, are described, to a certain extent rightly, as the majority community. Well, to them I would say the same thing as I used to do in 1921, *viz.*, that voluntary

¹ Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

² Round Table Conference at London.

surrender on the part of either community, preferably by the majority community, of all rights and privileges would immediately effect this unity. It would be a great thing, a brave thing, for the Hindus to achieve this act of self-denial. Let them say to the Mussalmans: 'Have as big a share of the spoils as you want: we will be content to serve you.' What, after all, are the things you are quarrelling for? Not, indeed, for air and water. It is for seats on legislatures and local bodies. What has the vast majority of you got to do with them? How many of you can go there? And what can you do there? Outside the legislatures you did wonderful things; you defied the ordinances, you defied *lathi* charges and 'firing' orders, because you were conscious of your strength. If you retain the same consciousness, what would it matter to you if your Parliament had all Mussalmans in it and no Hindu? I am sick of these squabbles for seats, this scramble for the shadow of power. How I wish I could bring home to all Congressmen that they should have nothing to do with these legislatures? The very act of voluntary surrender will clothe you with a power undreamt of before.

And you, my sisters, what would you do by going to the Parliament? Do you aspire after collectorships, commissionerships or even the vicereignty? And, what would you do if one of you were to be the Viceroy of India? I know you would not care to, for the Viceroy has got to order executions and hangings—a thing you would heartily detest. Supposing we, the 'leaders', were to run a race for getting the Vicereignty, we would simply strangle ourselves. That is not the prize we have set our hearts on. We crave to be humble servants of the country. It is this spirit of service which I want to permeate the atmosphere. I want you to join me and share this aspiration. But if it does not appeal to you, you had better give me up, for that is the condition on which I tender my service. I have no other secret but that of voluntary surrender.

CAWNPORE AND ITS LESSON

“With carnage going on about me, I cannot bear to live unconcerned. Let me declare that as soon as I feel that life is unbearable, I should hope to have the courage to fast myself to death rather than witness these blood feuds.”

In the course of his first public speech at the Karachi Congress Pandul, Gandhiji referred to the tragic events at Cawnpore in the following words:

This leads me to the events in Cawnpore which has been a scene of carnage. This is due largely to the violence we had harboured against one another. It is the hand-writing on the wall. Though we have shown ourselves capable of limited non-violence, we have harboured violence in our hearts, we have been guilty of using coercion. The papers allege that Cawnpore Hindus went mad over Bhagat Singh's martyrdom and started with intimidating the Mussalmans who would not close their shops in Bhagat Singh's honour. You know the sequel. I am quite sure that if the spirit of Bhagat Singh is watching what is happening in Cawnpore to-day, he would feel deeply humiliated and ashamed. I say this, for I have heard him described as a man of honour. And what havoc we have done! Women insulted! Children done to death! Let no Hindu comfort himself with the thought that they were Mussalman children: let no Mussalman feel happy in the knowledge that it is Hindu children who have been killed. I do not know their religion. Let it be recognized that both Hindus and Mussalmans had lost their senses. They were all children of the soil, children of our common Motherland.

I have felt deeply ashamed of these deeds of blood, and to whoever my voice may reach I wish to declare that such things may any day prove more than I can bear. How can we, with Hindus and Mussalmans slaughtering one

another, continue to assert that we have been non-violent? How can I, a votary of Truth, hug the belief that we as a nation are non-violent if the mischief spreads? If I did so, I would be untrue to myself and to my Maker. With carnage going on about me, I cannot bear to live unconcerned. Let me declare, that as soon as I feel that life is unbearable, I should hope to have the courage to fast myself to death rather than witness these blood feuds. You know by this time that I cannot bear denial of pledges solemnly and voluntarily undertaken. I would sooner be dead than see merchants and others break their pledged word, than see those calling themselves Congressmen and swearing by the creed of the Congress break it in their hearts or openly. If I can witness this contradiction with equanimity, with what face can I stand before the world and my Maker? He will tell me I have been living a life of falsehood, a life of sham and fraud. I may not deceive myself and the world. Every moment of my existence is dedicated to the winning of *Swaraj* by means of truth and non-violence.

I know you will say that that sort of thing has been going on all these years, and I have done nothing to stop it. Penances with me are no mechanical acts. They are done in obedience to the inner voice. I am telling you what has been going on within me all these days. The crisis may never come, either because I am unnecessarily agitated, or because I have lost courage to face reality. I must be true to my Maker, and the moment I feel that life is insupportable for me, I hope not to be found wanting. What better reparation can I do than willing surrender of the body that has ceased to evoke response and may be a hindrance to the discovery of the true way?

THE SHAME OF CAWNPORE

“Let us forget the fact that we are Hindus and Mussalmans. Let us remember that we are Indians, and the shame of Cawnpore is the shame of India.”

Gandhiji made yet another moving reference to the Cawnpore riots the next day before the Subjects Committee of the Karachi Congress and said:

Let us not try to apportion the blame. Let us forget the fact that we are Hindus and Mussalmans. Let us remember that we are Indians, and the shame of Cawnpore is the shame of India. As for the Hindus, however, newspapers say that it was likely that Hindus were more to blame. And what for was all this carnage? How could we go so mad? I am grieved to have to inform you that Sjt. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi is reported to be missing or killed. Who would not be grieved over the death of such a genuine and earnest, selfless comrade? But there is another view of the case. Rather than that a number of insignificant poor Hindus be killed, is it not well that a leader like Ganesh Shankar should have been killed? Rather than the death of a number of hapless poor Mussalmans, would not the death of Dr. Ansari in the cause of peace or unity be more welcomed? For the knife in Dr. Ansari's body would act as the knife in the bodies of us all. It was, therefore, fortunate that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who was so eminently free from communal bias, who was an institution in himself, and who was the foremost worker of the place, should have laid down his life in the cause of peace. Let his great example be an inspiration to us all, let it awaken us to our sense of duty.¹ I

¹*Paying a further tribute to him in the next issue of Young India, Gandhiji wrote:*

The death of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was one to be envied

ask you to give your anxious consideration to the matter and help in the solution of the vexed question. Let the shame of Cawnpore teach us a lesson so that we may feel that even the loss of 300 men and women was not too high a price to be paid for permanent peace.

by us all. His blood is the cement that will ultimately bind the two communities. No pact will bind our hearts. But heroism such as Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi showed is bound in the end to melt the stoniest hearts, melt them into one. The poison has, however, gone so deep that the blood even of a man so great, so self-sacrificing and so utterly brave as Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi may to-day not be enough to wash us of it. Let this noble example stimulate us all to similar effort, should the occasion arise again. I tender to the bereaved widow and her children not my condolences but my congratulations for having deserved Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. He is not dead. He lives to-day far more truly than when we saw him in the body and knew him not.

JOIN THE CONGRESS

“Ever since the Congress was started, those who have served it have had charge of it. And yet the Congress does not belong only to them, does not stand only for them, it belongs to and stands for all.”

Addressing the Ulema's Conference at Karachi, Gandhiji appealed to them to join the Congress and said:

It is not right to say that the Congress is a Hindu organization. What is the Congress to do if Muslims would not care to go into it? The Congress is based on adult franchise, and any adult Hindu or Mussalman can join the Congress. No community is excluded. Ask the Muslim friends who are members of the Congress, and they will tell you that they have not come to grief by having joined the Congress. I ask you, therefore, not to suspect that the Congress is a Hindu organization. I ask every one of you to join the Congress and to take charge of it. But one cannot take charge of it by force. It can be done only by willing service. Ever since the Congress was started, those who have served it have had charge of it. And yet the Congress does not belong only to them, does not stand only for them, it belongs to and stands for all. It is the Swaraj Government in embryo. Its prestige is ever so much superior to that of the British Government, and the Congress President is greater than the Viceroy. Only monied people and men in high places know the Viceroy. One needs a motor-car to reach the Viceregal House. But the poorest man knows the Congress President (at present Sardar Vallabhbhai) and can walk up to him. The Sardar has dedicated himself to the service of the country, and he who serves the poor is great in the eyes of God. If you want to be in power under *Swaraj*, I invite you to assume the reins of the Con-

gress now by joining it in large numbers. It is the most powerful organization in the country. Join it. We will welcome you.

‘WHY I CANNOT DECIDE’

“I have the same love for the Mussalman as for the Hindu. My heart feels for the Mussalmans as much as for the Hindus. If I could tear it open, you would discover that there are no compartments in it—one reserved for the Hindus, another for the Mussalmans and so on.”

In the course of a statement before the A. I. C. C. meeting at Bombay on the question of his going to London for the Round Table Conference, Gandhiji made a feeling reference to the disturbed communal atmosphere and said:

But do not be sure that I am sailing until I have actually boarded the ship. For who knows what happens between to-day and the fifteenth? Ours is a vast country, there are all sorts of rumours in the air and anything may lead to a conflagration. You know what happened in the Jinnah Memorial Hall. Those are things that make me tremble, and may even unnerve me. Would you send a nervous wreck to the Conference? My decision would shock Lord Irwin who might well doubt whether I was in my senses, but even at the risk of ‘annoying him’ I would prefer to stay here, if something that may happen between now and fifteenth shook me to the marrow. I have the same love for the Mussalman as for the Hindu. My heart feels for the Mussalmans as much as for the Hindus. If I could tear it open, you would discover that there are no compartments in it, one reserved for the Hindus, another for the Mussalmans and so on. And, therefore, I hold myself responsible when I find a Mussalman running at a Hindu’s throat and *vice versa*. I have endured these things up to now, but there is a limit to human endurance. I am laying bare my heart to you as a man pledged to truth. I do not think any man can present a full record of what he feels, but I do know that I am keeping nothing from you. I hear rumblings of the storm, and I

want you not to be surprised if you find me quail before it. That moment my strength may entirely fail me and render me completely impotent. Having elected me your sole representative, I want you to accept me with all my limitations and weaknesses. I have revealed to you my true self in all my weakness and impotence. Maybe, I may conquer that weakness; maybe, a single Mussalman may be able to disabuse me of my fears and my impotence.

At this stage, he was so overwhelmed with emotion that he broke down, and could not proceed for a minute or two. But he soon composed himself, and proceeded to give in English a gist of what he had said in Hindi:

I did not really come here to pour out my feelings before you, but as I was proceeding, it was impossible for me to choke the rising emotions. I have gone through a heart-training which enables me to keep outwardly smiling, while a storm may be raging in my breast. That storm has reached a crisis and I am feeling unnerved and seem to have lost all power. And, therefore, I say, that although the atmosphere may be clear so far as Government are concerned, I may not be able to go because there is a doubt lurking in my breast, that when the moment comes it may find me unprepared. Think of the disgraceful scenes in the Jinnah Memorial Hall the other day. People who had done no wrong to anybody were pounced upon and belaboured without any provocation. I saw a man, who, if he chose to use his strength, would be a match for ten, profusely bleeding because of the brutal blows he had received that evening. It was a pitiable sight for me. There I had graphic account of the incident. It shot into me like an arrow. But that is not all. I am studying and trying to understand what is lying concealed under the surface, and I must to a certain extent hold myself responsible for what is happening. God used me as an instrument for creating that great awakening in the country in 1919. Naturally, passions were aroused, but as all regarded themselves Indians fighting for a common cause, there was no internecine conflict. But that was only a momentary dream soon to vanish like smoke, and now we

find that we are all at war against one another. That makes me unfit for the work for *Swaraj*. And so I say, that although the atmosphere may otherwise be clear, something might happen which might make me mad and absolutely powerless. Surely, you would not then want to send to London a man who was so unnerved. You must send some one with faith, and I find myself fast losing faith. That produced the collapse that you saw a moment ago.

PROBLEM OF MINORITIES

"I repeat that without the problem of minorities being solved, there is no *Swaraj* for India, there is no freedom for India. ... But I do not despair of, some day or other, finding a real and living solution in connection with the minorities' problem."

Addressing the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference, London, Gandhiji referred to the 'baffling' problem of minorities as follows:

I urge you, then, to read that writing on the wall. I ask you not to try the patience of a people known to be proverbially patient. We speak of the mild Hindu, and the Mussalman also, by contact good or evil with the Hindu, has himself become mild. And that mention of the Mussalman brings me to the baffling problem of minorities.

Believe me, that problem exists here, and I repeat what I used to say in India—I have not forgotten those words—that without the problem of minorities being solved, there is no *Swaraj* for India, there is no freedom for India. I know that; I realize it; and yet I came here in the hope perchance that I might be able to pull through a solution here. But I do not despair of, some day or other, finding a real and living solution in connection with the minorities' problem. I repeat what I have said elsewhere that so long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class, there will be no real living solution, there will be no living friendship between these communities.¹

¹ 'The alien rulers have ruled India on the principle of 'Divide and Rule.' No alien Imperial rule could go on in India unless the rulers now coquetted with one and then with the other party. We will continue to be divided so long as the wedge of foreign rule remains there, and sinks deeper and deeper. That is the way of the

It will be after all and at best a paper solution. But immediately you withdraw that wedge, the domestic ties, the domestic affections, the knowledge of common birth—do you suppose that all these will count for nothing? Were Hindus and Mussalmans and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen there? We have chapter and verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Mussalman historians to say that we were living in comparative peace even then. And Hindus and Mussalmans in the villages are not even to-day quarrelling. In those days they were not known to quarrel at all. The late Maulana Mahomed Ali often used to tell me, and he was himself a bit of an historian. He said: “If God”—*Allah*, as he called God—“gives me life, I propose to write the history of Mussalman rule in India; and then I will show, through documents that British people have preserved, that Aurangzeb was not so vile as he has been painted by the British historian, that the Moghul rule was not so bad as it has been shown to us in British history; and so on.” And so have Hindu historians written. This quarrel is not old; this quarrel is coeval with this acute shame. I dare to say it is coeval with the British advent, and immediately this relationship, the unfortunate, artificial, unnatural relationship between Great Britain and India is transformed into a natural relationship, when it becomes, if it does become, a voluntary partnership to be given up, to be dissolved at the will of either party, when it becomes that you will find that Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, untouchables, will all live together as one man.

wedge. But take out the wedge and the wedge and the split parts will instantly come together and unite.... But even if we continue to fight, I should think it a god-send. A man who broods on evil is as bad as a man who does evil, if he is no worse. And so if we are prevented from running at one another's throats simply because of the super-imposed force of alien rule, the sooner that force is removed the better. We should fight harder for a time, but we should unite better ultimately.—*Young India*: Nov. 5, 1931.

OUR FAILURE

“It is necessary for Congressmen, individually and collectively, to examine the quality of their non-violence. If it does not come out of real strength, it would be best and honest for the Congress to make such a declaration and make the necessary changes in its behaviour.”

The communal riots in Allahabad—the headquarters of the Congress—and the necessity of summoning the assistance of the police and even the military show that the Congress has not yet become fit to substitute the British authority. It is best to face this naked truth, however unpleasant it may be.

The Congress claims to represent the whole of India, not merely those few who are on the Congress register. It should represent even those who are hostile to it and who will even crush it, if they could. Not until we make good that claim, shall we be in a position to displace the British Government and function as an independent nation.

This proposition holds good whether we seek to displace British rule by violent action or non-violent.

Most probably, by the time these lines appear in print, peace would have been established in Allahabad and the other parts. That, however, will not take us further in our examination of the fitness of the Congress as an organization ready to displace British authority in its entirety.

No Congressman will seriously doubt that the Congress is not at the present moment capable of delivering the goods, if it was called upon to do so. If it was capable, it would not wait for the call. But every Congressman believes that the Congress is fast becoming such a body. The brilliant success at Haripura will be cited as the most conclusive proof of the fact.

The riots and certain other things I can mention should

make us pause and ask ourselves whether the Congress is really growing from strength to strength. I must own that I have been guilty of laying that claim. Have I been over-hasty in doing so?

It is my conviction that the phenomenal growth of the Congress is due to its acceptance and enforcement, however imperfect, of the policy of non-violence. Time has arrived to consider the nature of Congress non-violence. Is it non-violence of the weak and the helpless or of the strong and the powerful? If it is the former, it will never take us to our goal, and, if long practised, may even render us for ever unfit for self-government. The weak and helpless are non-violent in action because they must be. But, in reality, they harbour violence in their breasts and simply await opportunity for its display. It is necessary for Congressmen, individually and collectively, to examine the quality of their non-violence. If it does not come out of real strength, it would be best and honest for the Congress to make such a declaration and make the necessary changes in its behaviour.

By this time, *i.e.*, after seventeen years' practice of non-violence, the Congress should be able to put forth a non-violent army of volunteers, numbering not a few thousands but lacs who would be equal to every occasion where the police and the military are required. Thus, instead of one brave Pashupatinath Gupta who died¹ in the attempt to secure peace, we should be able to produce hundreds. And a non-violent army acts, unlike armed men, as well in times of peace as of disturbances. They would be constantly engaged in constructive activities that make riots impossible. Theirs will be the duty of seeking occasions for bringing warring communities together, carrying on peace propaganda, engaging in activities that would bring and keep them in touch with every single person, male and female, adult and child in their parish or division. Such an army should be ready to cope with any emergency, and in order to still the frenzy of mobs

¹ This statement was subsequently found to be incorrect. He was, however, seriously stabbed.

should risk their lives in numbers sufficient for the purpose. A few hundred, may be a few thousand, such spotless deaths will once for all put an end to the riots. Surely, a few hundred young men and women giving themselves deliberately to mob fury will be any day a cheap and brave method of dealing with such madness than the display and use of the police and the military.

It has been suggested that when we have our independence, riots and the like will not occur. This seems to me to be an empty hope, if, in the course of the struggle for freedom, we do not understand and use the technique of non-violent action in every conceivable circumstance. To the extent that the Congress Ministers have been obliged to make use of the police and the military, to that extent, in my opinion, we must admit our failure. That the Ministers could not have done otherwise is unfortunately only too true. I should like every Congressman, I should like the Working Committee, to ask themselves why we have failed, if they think with me that we have.

AN APPEAL FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

"...When it (non-violence) becomes a cloak for our weakness, it emasculates us. Far better than emasculation would be the bravery of those who use physical force. Far better than cowardice would be meeting one's death fighting."

In the course of his opening address to the Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference in Delong, Orissa, Gandhiji delivered himself of the following impassioned utterance on the communal riots in U. P.:

The riots in U. P. affected me deeply. I discussed them with Maulana Azad and the Bose Brothers in terms of non-violence. I felt that we were getting not nearer towards our goal, but farther away from it. Haripura gave me reason to hope that we were growing in strength, and that in spite of our shortcomings we should be able to see *Swaraj* in my life-time. I had thought that we should in the course of the year acquire that strength. But the riots in Allahabad and elsewhere came as a rude shock. We were, to our shame, compelled to seek the aid of the police and the military.

Supposing the Viceroy were to invite the President of the Congress to meet him and to state the Congress terms, do you think he would have the strength to say: "The Congress is capable of taking charge of the administration, the British may go?" Do you think we would tell him that we should be able to do without the police and the military, that we should be able to come to terms with the Princes, the Zamindars and with the Mussalmans? I am afraid we could not honestly say that we should easily be able to come to terms with these. And yet, if we had real non-violence in us, we should be able to say and do these things.

I, therefore, ask you and myself whether our non-violence is of the weak instead of the strong as it should

be. That it can work to a certain extent in the hands of the weak is true. It has so worked with us. But when it becomes a cloak for our weakness, it emasculates us. Far better than emasculation would be the bravery of those who use physical force. Far better than cowardice would be meeting one's death fighting. We were, perhaps, all originally brutes, and I am prepared to believe that we have become men by a slow process of evolution from the brute. We were thus born with brute strength, but we were born men in order to realize God Who dwells in us. That, indeed, is the privilege of man, and it distinguishes him from the brute creation. But to realize God is to see Him in all that lives, *i.e.*, to realize our oneness with all creation. This is impossible unless we voluntarily shun physical force and develop conscious non-violence that is latent in every one of us. This can only come out of strength. Have we the non-violence of the strong? It is open to us to discard it as an impossible ideal, and choose instead the method of violence. But the choice has to be made.

And if it is a weapon of the strong, then there are some inescapable conclusions. We should be able to deal with riots and stop the increasing tension between Hindus and Mussalmans. What, you will ask, we as votaries of non-violence should have done to quell these riots? Well, it was primarily the work of the Congress Committee to quell the riots. We should have thousands of volunteers ready to serve in a crisis of this kind. In 1921, we drew up a pledge for volunteers, wherein it was provided that a volunteer should be non-violent in thought, word and deed. Hakim Sahib Ajmal Khan, who was then President, had the same pledge accepted by the *Khilafat* volunteers. It was not without difficulty that the pledge was accepted by the *Khilafat* Conference. For a volunteer to be non-violent in word and deed was all right, some of the *Maulanas* said. But to expect them to be non-violent in thought was a tall order. I was seeking, they said, to be master of their minds. I said: 'No. The mastery is to be of *ahimsa*, not of any single individual.' Ultimately, they accepted the pledge. But, in spite of our

having accepted the pledge 17 years ago, we have not developed the irresistible strength that such acceptance of *ahimsa* means. The reason is that we have not troubled, we have not laboured, to organize such a non-violent volunteer army. If we cannot do so, if we cannot carry out the pledge, it would be well to reconsider our position. The tragedy is that the pledge is still in existence, but it exists on paper. If we had, on a sufficient scale, such a non-violent army as the pledge contemplates, we should not have had these riots; and if there had been, they would have quelled the riots or immolated themselves in the attempt. We have heard of only one who met his death. I admire his self-immolation. But my breast would have swelled with joy if there had been several Guptas.

Do you think this is an empty dream? Do you think we cannot quell the riots even with such a non-violent army? If you really think so, if that is the conclusion that you arrived at after calm and dispassionate thinking, you must also conclude that *Swaraj* cannot be attained by means of non-violence.

THE CHOICE

"The Congress is the only political organization in the world which has, at my instance, adopted unadulterated non-violence for the attainment of *Swaraj*. It is its only sanction. I dare to say that if its quality is not what it should be, it will do great harm to the nation."

My remarks arising out of the recent riots in U. P. have attracted much attention. Friends have sent me cuttings from the Press. This is some of the criticism printed or spoken :

1. My writing betrayed hysteria.
2. I wrote without sufficient data.
3. I had recanted my views on non-co-operation and civil resistance.
4. I had been driven to the policy of the Liberals.
5. Congressmen had never adopted non-violence as between themselves.
6. I was expecting the impossible from human nature.
7. If my position was accepted *Swaraj* would never be obtained, for all India could never become non-violent.

There is much more I could cull from the criticism. I have only taken the relevant parts.

1. If my article betrayed hysteria, the symptoms still persist, for in spite of the criticism which I have studied with the care it demanded, I see nothing to change the position I have taken up. The critics should remember that my proposition was specific and narrow. *Swaraj* could not be obtained through non-violent means unless our non-violence was of the brave, and such as to be able to deal effectively with violence. I have not maintained that it could not be obtained by other means. But if it could be so obtained, we were not ready to deliver the goods, for we were not ready for matching our force

against the British.

2. All the data required were that there were riots, no matter on how small a scale, that Congressmen were not able to deal with them non-violently, and that the aid of the police and the military had to be summoned. There was no dispute about these three broad facts. They were enough to enable me to draw the conclusions I did. In this, there was no reflection on the Ministers. I have admitted that they could not have acted otherwise. The fact, however, remains that the Congress non-violence was not able to cope with the emergency.

3. There is nothing in my article to warrant the inference that I had lost my faith in non-co-operation and civil resistance. All I need say is that it is brighter than ever. Two are quite enough to bring *Swaraj*, provided that non-violence practised is of the bravest.

4. I wish I could be drawn towards the policy of the Liberals. I have many personal friends among them. But they have no sanction. I claim that I have an infallible sanction. My article was written to show that during the riots it was not the sanction that had failed, the failure was of the organization which had accepted the sanction, namely, active, constructive non-violence.

5. I can only refer the critics to the many resolutions of the Congress which do not confine the use of non-violence only towards Englishmen. Indeed, I remember having many discussions at the Working Committee meetings at which the necessity of non-violence among ourselves was emphasized.

6. Well, human nature has hitherto responded nobly to the call of non-violence. But I am concerned with the Congress nature. Congressmen have to sign a pledge which commits them to non-violence. My question was and is—have they non-violence in them? If they have, is it of the brave? My thesis is that if it is of the brave, it should be enough for dealing with the riots and for delivering the goods.

7. This is answered in the foregoing.

But I have the fear that our non-violence is not of the kind required. Congressmen may not treat my warning

lightly. After all, I am supposed to be the Congress expert, however inefficient, on non-violence. I have confidence in my readings and my remedies. I cite Ahmedabad and Viramgam violences, Bombay violence during the Prince's visit, and Chauri Chaura on the eve of Bardoli. The results have amply justified the remedies applied at my instance, though on these occasions critics were not wanting who had expressed their strong disapproval of the suspensions. I have no doubt about my present diagnosis about the remedies. The remedies are not beyond our ability if we have a living conviction about non-violence and its nature. Here are some of the remedies:

1. We must discover a solution for the Hindu-Muslim tension. I use that expression deliberately instead of 'communal'—for if we find this, the other will follow as a matter of course.

2. There must be purging of the Congress registers so as to make them proof against bogus voters. From all accounts I receive, our registers contain too many bogus names to be called at all accurate.

3. Congressmen must not be afraid to find themselves in a minority.

4. Without delay, every Provincial Congress Committee should raise a proper corps of volunteers pledged to non-violence in thought, word and deed. And there should be a manual of instructions as to training etc. prepared for universal use.

There is nothing heroic or impracticable in these suggestions. But they are impracticable if those who lead have no living faith in non-violence. If they have not, the sooner non-violence is removed from the Congress vocabulary, the better it is for the Congress and the nation. The alternative is certainly not unadulterated violence. The Congress is the only political organization in the world which has, at my instance, adopted unadulterated non-violence for the attainment of *Swaraj*. It is its only sanction. I dare to say that if its quality is not what it should be, it will do great harm to the nation. In the last heat, we may be found to be cowards instead of brave men and wo-

men. And there is no disgrace greater than cowardice for fighters for freedom. Surely, there is nothing to be ashamed of in retracing our steps. If we feel that we shall not be able to displace the British power without a violent struggle, the Congress must say so to the nation and prepare accordingly. We must do what is being done all the world over—'forbear when we can, hit when we must.' If that is to be our creed or policy, we have lost precious seventeen years. But it is never too late to learn and mend. Seventeen years in the life of a nation is nothing. It will go hard with Congressmen, if, having received the warning, they do not make the choice.

MARTIAL v. MORAL

“If the Congress non-violence is merely confined to abstention from causing physical hurt to the British officials and their dependents, such non-violence can never bring us independence. It is bound to be worsted in the final heat.”

It is often forgotten that the Congress has only moral authority to back it. The ruling power has the martial, though it often dilutes the martial with the moral. This vital difference has come to the fore since the assumption of office by the Congress in seven provinces. This office-holding is either a step towards greater prestige or its total loss. If it is not to be a total loss, the ministers and the legislators have to be watchful of their own personal and public conduct. They have to be, like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion in every thing. They may not make private gains either for themselves or for their relatives or friends. If the relatives or friends get any appointment, it must only be because they are the best among the candidates, and their market value is always greater than what they get under the Government. The Ministers and the legislators on the Congress ticket have to be fearless in the performance of their duty. They must always be ready to risk the loss of their seats or offices. Offices and seats in the legislatures have no merit outside their ability to raise the prestige and power of the Congress. And since both depend wholly upon the possession of the morals, both public and private, any moral lapse means a blow to the Congress. This is the necessary implication of non-violence. If the Congress non-violence is merely confined to abstention from causing physical hurt to the British officials and their dependents, such non-violence can never bring us independence. It is bound to be worsted in the final heat. Indeed, we shall find it to be worthless, if not positively harmful, long before the final heat is reached.

There is considerable force in the argument of those who have conceived Congress non-violence in that narrow light when they say that it is a broken reed.

If, on the other hand, non-violence, with all its implications, is the Congress policy, let every Congressman examine himself and reconstruct himself accordingly. Let him not wait for instructions from the Working Committee. After all, the Working Committee can act only in so far as it interprets the public mind. And non-violence is not a quality to be evolved or expressed to order. It is an inward growth depending for sustenance upon intense individual effort.

I have received several letters offering the writers' names for enrolment as volunteers ready to immolate themselves at times of rioting and the like. To these writers I would suggest that they enlist co-workers themselves, form local corps, and begin training in accordance with the suggestion I have made. Let them not confine themselves merely to preparedness for emergencies, but for the daily walk of life in all its departments, personal, domestic, social, economic, political, religious. Only thus they will find themselves more than ready for dealing with emergencies in their own localities or beats. They may not aim, except indirectly, at influencing events happening hundreds of miles away from their scene of activity. That ability will come, if the right beginning is made in the first instance.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A PEACE BRIGADE

"A non-violent man can do nothing save by the power and grace of God. Without it, he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear and without retaliation."

Sometime ago I suggested the formation of a Peace Brigade, whose members would risk their lives in dealing with riots, especially communal. The idea was that this Brigade should substitute the police and even the military. This reads ambitious. The achievement may prove impossible. Yet, if the Congress is to succeed in its non-violent struggle, it must develop the power to deal peacefully with such situations. Communal riots are engineered by politically-minded men. Many of those who take part in them are under the influence of the latter. Surely, it should not be beyond the wit of Congressmen to devise a method or methods of avoiding ugly communal situations by peaceful means. I say this irrespective of whether there is or there is not a communal pact. It cannot be that any party seeks to force a pact by violent means. Even if such a pact were a possibility, it would not be worth the paper on which it might be written. For, behind such a pact there will be no common understanding. What is more, even after a pact is arrived at, it would be too much to expect that there would never be any communal riots.

Let us, therefore, see what qualifications a member of the contemplated Peace Brigade should possess.

1. He or she must have a living faith in non-violence. This is impossible without a living faith in God. A non-violent man can do nothing save by the power and grace of God. Without it, he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear and without retaliation. Such courage comes from the belief that God sits in the hearts of all, and that there should be no fear in the presence of God. The knowledge of the omnipresence of God also means respect for the lives of even those who

may be called opponents or *goondas*. This contemplated intervention is a process of stilling the fury of man when the brute in him gets the mastery over him.

2. This messenger of peace must have equal regard for all the principal religions of the earth. Thus, if he is a Hindu, he will respect the other faiths current in India. He must, therefore, possess a knowledge of the general principles of the different faiths professed in the country.

3. Generally speaking, this work of peace can only be done by local men in their own localities.

4. The work can be done singly or in groups. Therefore, no one need wait for companions. Nevertheless, one would naturally seek companions in one's own locality and form a local brigade.

5. This messenger of peace will cultivate through personal service contacts with the people in his locality or chosen circle, so that when he appears to deal with ugly situations, he does not descend upon the members of a riotous assembly as an utter stranger, liable to be looked upon as a suspect or an unwelcome visitor.

6. Needless to say, a peace-bringer must have a character beyond reproach and must be known for his strict impartiality.

7. Generally, there are previous warnings of coming storms. If these are known, the Peace Brigade will not wait till the conflagration breaks out but will try to handle the situation in anticipation.

8. Whilst, if the movement spreads, it might be well if there are some whole-time workers, it is not absolutely necessary that there should be. The idea is to have as many good and true men and women as possible. These can be had only if volunteers are drawn from those who are engaged in various walks of life, but have leisure enough to cultivate friendly relations with the people living in their circle and otherwise possess the qualifications required of a member of the Peace Brigade.

9. There should be a distinctive dress worn by the members of the contemplated brigade, so that in course of time they will be recognized without the slightest difficulty.

These are but general suggestions. Each centre can work out its own constitution on the basis here suggested.

Lest false hopes may be raised, I must warn workers against entertaining the hope that I can play any active part in the formation of Peace Brigades. I have not the health, energy or time for it. I find it hard enough to

cope with the tasks I dare not shirk. I can only guide and make suggestions through correspondence or these columns. Therefore, let those who appreciate the idea and feel they have the ability, take the initiative themselves. I know that the proposed Brigade has great possibilities and that the idea behind it is quite capable of being worked out in practice.

HINDU-MUSLIM CLASHES

"It is better to be violent if there is violence in our breasts than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence. Violence is any day preferable to impotence. There is hope for a violent man to become non-violent. There is no such hope for the impotent."

If proof were wanted to show that the non-violence of the Congress was in effect violence in suspension or inactive violence, it is furnished by the effective, though quite undisciplined, violence exhibited in Hindu-Muslim clashes. Had the thousands of Hindus and Muslims who took part in the *Khilafat* agitation been non-violent at heart, they could never have been violent towards one another as they are continually found to be. Nor can it be said that those who take part in the clashes are not Congressmen. If we rule out all those who resort to violence as non-Congressmen, the Congress will cease to be a mass organization. For the combatants in these clashes are derived from the masses. Moreover, one finds to-day violence resorted to by rival Congressmen at Congress meetings. The gross indiscipline and fraud practised at Congress elections are all illustrations of Congress violence. It is difficult to say, therefore, who, if any, are non-violent Congressmen. If they were in a majority in the Congress, and if they played an effective part in Hindu-Muslim clashes, they could stop them or at least give their lives in stopping them. If the bulk of Congressmen were truly non-violent, Muslims would be obliged to confess that Congressmen could not be accused of anti-Muslim bias. It is not enough for Congressmen to say that they have not been found guilty of incorrect attitude. I may be proved to be legally correct, but may fail miserably if my action was examined in non-violent scales. But this non-violence has to be non-violence of the brave and the strong. It must come from inward

conviction. I have, therefore, not hesitated to say that it is better to be violent if there is violence in our breasts than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence. Violence is any day preferable to impotence. There is hope for a violent man to become non-violent. There is no such hope for the impotent.

Elaborating this point further in his note Not Too Late in the same issue of Harijan, Gandhiji wrote :

As I have made clear in my note on Hindu-Muslim clashes, it is not possible to claim non-violence for the Congress masses. Those Congressmen who believe in non-violence as a creed, to be enforced as much in Hindu-Muslim quarrels as in defending India, have to begin with the alphabet of non-violence and find out how many Congressmen are with them. It is highly probable that they will have to retire from the Congress and, like me, serve and convert the Congress from without. The new road is straight enough, but difficult to negotiate. It is overlaid with the bones of lonely seekers. They died without finding the way, but they had the inward satisfaction of having lived and died for their faith. When I wrote on the formation of Peace Brigades, I had adumbrated a programme for them. The brigades died as soon as they were born, but the programme abides. It is a programme of courting death in preventing Hindu-Muslim clashes and the like. It is a programme of dying to prevent violence. Such death, however, will count as criminal suicide if the suicide has not a heart free from impurity and malice.

SIND RIOTS

"God helps only those who help themselves. The Sindhis are no exception. They must learn the art of defending themselves against robbers, raiders and the like. If they do not feel safe and are too weak to defend themselves, they should leave the place which has proved too inhospitable to live in."

I have been following the riots in Sind with painful interest. Many people delude themselves with the belief that I possess powers to remedy all wrongs. I wish I had them, though I am not sure that such possession will be an unmixed blessing. I should make people helpless if I made an indiscriminate use of such powers. And they would be of no use, if I might not use them freely. As it is, I use what powers I have to the fullest extent. Thank God, they are too limited to be harmful. My chief work, however, is to teach people to help themselves.

Here is a pathetic wire from Shikarpur :

"Riots, loot, incendiarism. Sukkur district villages Hindus mercilessly butchered, women and girls raped and kidnapped. Hindu life, property unsafe. Situation most critical. Government policy not firm. Pray send inquiry committee immediately to see situation personally.—President, Hindu General Panchayat."

It is the third of its kind from Sind. I took no notice of the first two, mainly because I was pre-occupied in Allahabad and I had no concrete consolation to offer. The Shikarpur Panchayat has come to the wrong person for help. For, I am myself helpless. The Congress has not yet sufficiently advanced in non-violence to deal with riots and the like. It must develop it enough to deal with such situations if it is to retain its prestige. I suggested Peace Brigades, but the suggestion proved premature if not unworkable. No doubt, the Sind Government should be able to protect life and

property of the people within their jurisdiction. Evidently, the matter has gone beyond their control. Sind is nominally autonomous and to that extent less able to protect life and property than the preceding Government. For, it has never had previous training in the policing or the military arts. I have shown in previous writings that the Central Government is impotent to prevent loss of life, property and worse during riots. It is able to check their spread and punish the wrong-doers when it wishes. It is organized solely for the protection of Imperial trade and, therefore, for the maintenance of peace in so far as it is necessary for the safety of that trade. Hence, it is ill-equipped for real protection of the people. Such protection involves the training of the people in the art of self-defence and securing their co-operation in quelling riots, etc. This would be putting Imperial rule in jeopardy.

Now the only effective way in which I can help the Sindhis is to show them the way of non-violence. But that cannot be learnt in a day. The other way is the way the world has followed hitherto, *i.e.*, armed defence of life and property. God helps only those who help themselves. The Sindhis are no exception. They must learn the art of defending themselves against robbers, raiders and the like. If they do not feel safe and are too weak to defend themselves, they should leave the place which has proved too inhospitable to live in.

SIND TRAGEDY—I.

“Let the weak ones never rely upon armed help. Such help will only make them weaker. If they have not the capacity for non-violent resistance, they should learn the art of defending themselves.”

I have before me several letters from Sind and a longish report from Dr. Choithram over the recent riots in Sukkur and Shikarpur. The Sind Hindus should remember that Sind has a National Government. Though, for the sake of brevity, I have often used the term Congress Government, the proper expression is National Democratic Government as distinguished from Foreign Bureaucratic Government, which it replaces. Whilst in discussing domestic differences and party politics we have to speak of Congress and Muslim League Governments, we must for all other purposes think and speak in terms of National Government. And so those who feel aggrieved must appeal to their Provincial National Governments and cultivate public opinion in favour of justice and public tranquillity. It would be wrong always to think in communal terms. I know that we may not shut our eyes to hard facts. But to attribute everything to the communal spirit is a sign of inferiority complex. It may well perpetuate what is yet a temporary distemper in the national life.

But as I have already suggested, contrasted with irresponsible bureaucracy, National Governments would be found to be weak in action because of their responsibility to the people in whose name and by whose goodwill alone they can rule. They can, therefore, deal with crimes with more or less success, but they will be found to be powerless to deal with popular upheavals which communal riots are. British military aid will not always be at their disposal. National Governments will

cease to be national if they have to depend on British military aid. Moreover, if the Congress policy of non-violence becomes universal among all parties, military and even police aid must become taboo. Before the other parties can be expected to become non-violent, Congressmen have to express non-violence in ample measure in their daily conduct. Be that, however, as it may, I can only advise the afflicted people of Sind in terms of non-violence.

The question in Sind is not really one between Hindus and Muslims. It is essentially one between weak people and strong. Muslims fight among themselves as badly as with Hindus. Hindus have also been known to fight among themselves. It will be wrong to weigh ferocity in golden scales.

Hinduism has become a synonym for weakness, and Islam for physical strength. Hindus, although they have been taught to believe in *ahimsa*, have not shown *en masse* the strength of *ahimsa*, have never shown its superiority when matched against physical strength. I have maintained that superiority over physical strength, however overwhelming, is the core of *ahimsa*, and I have further maintained that this non-violence can be exercised as well by individuals as by groups of them, yea even by millions together. The experiment is still in the making. Sufficient evidence has accumulated during the past twenty years to show that the experiment is worth making. Nothing can possibly be lost by continuing it, provided, of course, that the non-violence is of the standard brand.

Nothing has come under my observation to show that there was in Sukkur or Shikarpur even one person who believed in and practised non-violence of the strong. Had there been one, we would surely have known of him as we know of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. One such person can any day give a better account of himself than one armed to the teeth.

There are many Congressmen in Sukkur and Shikarpur, but they are not non-violently organized. It is not their fault. They know no better. As I have been

repeatedly saying now-a-days, our non-violence has not been of the strong. Weak people cannot develop it all of a sudden. But I have no other drug in my chest. I can only prescribe what I have and what has never failed. I can only, therefore, say: 'Try and try again until you succeed.' In the composition of the truly brave, there should be no malice, no anger, no distrust, no fear of death or physical hurt. Non-violence is certainly not for those who lack these essential qualities. Wherever there are such persons they should be able to cover the weak ones, provided, of course, that they would listen to their helpers.

Let the weak ones never rely upon armed help. Such help will only make them weaker. If they have not the capacity for non-violent resistance, they should learn the art of defending themselves. It does not require a strong body; it requires a stout heart. The African Negroes have become, or were 25 years ago, so terror-stricken that they could not face a white lad—a pigmy compared to the giant-framed Negroes. White children were trained from their infancy not to fear the Negroes. The first lesson, therefore, for those who will learn how to defend themselves is to shed the fear of being hurt or being killed. I would like them to observe the laws of the game. Just as there is such a thing as honour among thieves, there should surely be honour between combatants. One hears so often of children and old men being butchered, women being outraged. If men must become beasts, there might even then be some decency observed. Religion is outraged when an outrage is perpetrated in its name. Almost all the riots in this unhappy land take place in the name of religion, though they might have a political motive behind them. My chief point is that the existing situation is intolerable. Cowardice should have no place in the national dictionary.

I have suggested *hijrat*. I repeat the suggestion. It is not unpractical. People do not know its value. High and mighty have been known to have resorted to it before now. Planned *hijrat* requires courage and fore-thought. The second book of the Old Testament is

known as Exodus. It is an account of the planned flight of the Israelites. In exile they prepared for a military career. In modern times we have the example of the flight of the Doukhobours from Russia owing to persecution. Theirs was no military career. On the contrary, they were non-violent. There is, therefore, nothing wrong, dishonourable or cowardly in self-imposed exile. India is a vast country. Though poor, it is well able to admit of inter-migration, especially of those who are capable, hard-working and honest. The people of Sukkur and Shikarpur have all the three qualities. They must appeal to the Government. Only they can give very little help. Apart from political pacts, local heads among Hindus and Muslims may meet with mutual profit. It can do nobody or party any good to promote mutual slaughter and consequent increase in the existing ill-will. But if no honourable local settlement is arrived at, and if the local residents do not feel able to defend themselves and their families and possessions non-violently or violently, I have no doubt that they should vacate the place in which they live in perpetual fear of their lives and the honour of their women-folk.

SIND TRAGEDY—II

“My advice to migrate is for all those who feel oppressed and cannot live without loss of self-respect in a particular place. If the Muslims, where they are in a minority, were really oppressed and they sought my advice, I should give them the same advice that I have given to the Sind Hindus.”

Q. In your article *Sind Tragedy* you have advised the oppressed Hindus of Sind to perform *bijrat*, if they cannot protect their honour and self-respect by remaining in Sind. Where do you expect them to go? Who will provide them the wherewithal in their place of refuge? May I further ask you if the remedy of *bijrat* is meant for Hindus only? Why do not you advise *bijrat* to the Mussalmans in the Congress provinces who complain so loudly of ‘oppression’? As it is, you have given them weightage in provinces in which they are in a minority and a statutory majority in the Punjab where they are numerically superior.

A. My advice to migrate is for all who feel oppressed and cannot live without loss of self-respect in a particular place. If the Muslims, where they are in a minority, were really oppressed and they sought my advice, I should give them the same advice that I have given to the Sind Hindus. But, as a general rule, they are capable of holding their own even when they are in a minority. I have already told the Sindhis that, if they have the bravery to defend themselves even though they are a handful, they should not leave the places where they are settled. My advice is meant for those who, though they are conscious of self-respect, lack the strength that comes from non-violence or the capacity to return blow for blow.

The question what the refugees should do after migration, is surely secondary. A few thousand of them can be easily absorbed in a vast country like India. Sindhis are enterprising. They are scattered all over the world. I hardly think any public appeal will be necessary. Let them know that there are refugees from Limbdi who are bravely and silently bearing their exile.

A keen sense of honour turns every privation into a joy. But, perhaps, migration will be unnecessary. I see signs of Muslim leaders realizing their responsibility and making arrangements to create among the Hindus concerned a sense of security. If this happens, it would be as it should be.

The question of my befriending the Ali Brothers is surely irrelevant to the great issue I have raised. I am not sorry for anything I have done in connection with communal unity. I should repeat the same thing under similar circumstances. Neither community has lost by the unity of the *Khilafat* days, temporary though it unfortunately proved to be. You are wrong in holding me responsible for the Communal Decision. It has nothing to commend itself to any community except the solid fact that we are living under it, and that we have not yet found an agreed formula to replace it.

SIND

"It is the duty of those Congressmen who feel the need for helping self-defence groups and have the capacity for doing so, to go to the rescue of the terror-stricken men. This they can do by resigning their membership of the Congress."

The position of Congressmen in Sind is by no means enviable. They have a most difficult time before them. Their non-violence, if they have it in them, has not benefited those who live in fear of their lives. It is true that no one else has helped them. I warned them at the very outset that they must learn the art of helping themselves as others do, or by non-violence as Congressmen are supposed or expected to do. In some places, they are organizing national guards. Those who do, look up to Congressmen for help and guidance. For, the latter have been their helpers and guides hitherto. Some Congressmen feel that without any intention themselves of taking up arms, they can put courage into the people if they train them in the art of self-defence, whether with or without arms. The question has attained importance and demands immediate answer in view of the unequivocal resolution of the A. I. C. C. recently held at Poona. I am quite clear that no Congressman, so long as he is even a four-anna member of the Congress, can take part in organizing or aiding self-defence groups without committing a breach of the Poona resolution. But I am equally clear that it is the duty of those Congressmen who feel the need for helping self-defence groups and have the capacity for doing so, to go to the rescue of the terror-stricken men. This they can do by resigning their membership of the Congress. By doing so, they will enhance the prestige of the Congress and their own usefulness. The fact that they feel the call to help is the decisive factor in determining their course of action.

ECONOMIC RUIN IN SIND

“The lawlessness is a monster with many faces. It hurts all in the end, including those who are primarily responsible for it.”

The following printed letter has been circulated by Shri Tarachand D. Gajra and Shri C. T. Valccha :

“We trust you received our previous communication, *A Note on the Present State of Lawlessness in Sind*. Herewith follows another one, *Economic Ruin due to the Lawlessness in Sind*. It is a sad story of silent misery that has befallen those who are migrating without any financial aid from the public or the authorities. Elsewhere such a thing would evoke wide international public support and sympathy. We hope your interest in our province will grow.”

I take the following from the statement referred to in the letter :

“Great havoc has been wrought in the economic life of the province by the present lawlessness in Sind. The village life is almost on the brink of total ruin. The peasantry, whose only property and means of sustenance are the bulls and the milch cattle, find themselves without both on account of depredations by thieves, as thefts of cattle have risen to abnormal proportions. The lot of the cultivator has come to this that he passes the day of toil followed by a night of vigil.

“The Hindus in the villages do not feel themselves strong enough to face thieves and dacoits. Hence, they have taken to migrating from smaller villages to bigger villages, and those who are in bigger villages are leaving for urban areas.

“With a view to having some idea of this migratory movement, herein below are given figures about one of the sixty-one *tahsils* in Sind, namely Hyderabad taluka. These have been collected by Prof. Ghanshyam, M. L. A. (Congress-Hyderabad Rural Constituency). From several villages almost all Hindu families have left, and from most of the remaining ones nearly fifty per cent of the Hindus have migrated.”

Then follow the figures about the migration from 42 villages in the single *tahsil* of Hyderabad. Of these,

all the Hindu families in 17 villages have migrated. Of the rest, some villages had only one family left. More than 50 per cent of the families had left all the other villages.

The framers of the statement thus comment on the figures :

“To fully grasp the significance of the above figures, it should be borne in mind that Hyderabad *tabsil* is in one of the best situated parts of the province. It is immediately round the district headquarters, while the Hyderabad district itself is the central district of the province—both the eastern desert boundary and the hilly western border of the province lying far away. Even the Sukkur district, which witnessed the recent abominable atrocities, is far distant from Hyderabad. If that is the state of affairs in the safest part of the province, the extent of migration from villages in the *tabסים* in other districts such as Dadu, Jacobabad, Larkana and Sukkur can easily be imagined.”

I need not reproduce the other paragraphs of the statement. The whole of it is a dignified and dispassionate narrative of the calamity that has overtaken the Hindus. The narrative shows that it has begun to affect the Muslims also. The Hindus of Sind are enterprising. They supply the felt wants of the Muslim agriculturists. The two are closely intertwined. Communalism of the virulent type is a recent growth. The lawlessness is a monster with many faces. It hurts all in the end, including those who are primarily responsible for it.

The writers of the covering letter are right in saying that the Sind calamity is an all-India concern. It is as much the duty of the Congress as of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha to deal with the situation in the right spirit. The Government of Sind will be judged by the manner in which they handle the situation. Nor can the Central Government look on indifferently while a province of India, which is watered by the mighty Indus and which contains the remains of our proud and ancient past, is being devastated by lawlessness which, if not checked in time, may travel beyond the imaginary boundary of Sind. For what happens in India, whether good or bad, in one part, must ultimately affect the whole of India.

SIND HINDUS

"I have said that for those who do not believe in non-violence, armed defence is the only remedy. But if I am asked to advise how it can be done, I can only say : 'I do not know.'"

Shri Shamdas Gidwani writes a letter on the situation in Sind from which I quote the following :

"Most of us Sind Hindus have not been able to follow the advice you thought fit to tender regarding non-violence. We find that this advice is in direct conflict with the teachings of Lord Shri Krishna. We have also been advised by you to migrate somewhere else if we are not able to protect ourselves. This advice again we are unable to follow for practical reasons.

"You know several of the reasons, and you have yourself mentioned some of them in your recent article in *Harijan* which we all greatly appreciate. You also know that Hindus in Sind, though only 27 per cent of the population, own fifty per cent of the land. We are scattered all over the province, and our population in some of the villages is between two to ten per cent. We pay nearly the whole of the income-tax revenue in the province; we contribute fifty per cent of land revenue and nearly the whole of the customs revenue. If we follow your advice, we shall be not only cowards but become landless and countryless. There is also a danger in our migrating to other provinces, for it will mean a public confession of the failure of a community to protect itself merely because an aggressive community thought fit to tyrannize over us and the protecting arms of law and order were not made available for us. That would again be a confession of the failure of democracy. On the other hand, what we feel is that, if you had advised the people of Sind—particularly the Hindus—to train themselves in the use of arms, they would have been able to better protect themselves and would have been saved all the series of murders that had been wantonly committed on the Hindus in recent months."

At the same time that I received this letter, I saw in the papers that five Hindus were shot dead openly while they were pursuing their normal business. As usual, the murderers have not been traced. Is this a plan of terrorism to drive the Hindus out of Sind, or is it some-

thing else? Some one in Sind ought to be able to answer the question.

Shri Gidwani does not subscribe to non-violence. He thinks that my advice is contrary to the teachings of Lord Krishna. He thinks, for (himself) very good reasons, that the Hindus cannot act non-violently. For equally good reasons he thinks they cannot migrate. But he would like me to advise them to defend themselves by arms. This is like asking a nature cure physician to prescribe allopathic drugs. Can he be trusted to prescribe the right drugs? And what will my advice be worth when my own hands are incapable of wielding arms? Shri Gidwani should go to a physician who knows the business and will, on due occasion, run to the rescue and always be ready to give the necessary training. I have said that for those who do not believe in non-violence, armed defence is the only remedy. But if I am asked to advise how it can be done, I can only say: 'I do not know.'

But Shri Gidwani is trifling with the crisis when he lazily looks up to me to guide Sind Hindus on impossible terms. If he sincerely believes in the solution he has proposed, he must himself take the training at once and lead the terrified Hindus of Sind along the path of armed defence. It is wrong for the leaders of Sind to look for outside help. They should cease to write. They should seriously think out a plan of action, violent or non-violent, and follow it up firmly and bravely.

I venture also to suggest to the responsible Muslims of Sind that their reputation is at stake. If they cannot stop these senseless murders of innocent people, history will find them guilty. They will never persuade anybody that they are helpless to deal with the mischief. Such acts are impossible without the silent sympathy of the society to which the perpetrators of the murders belong.

MORE CALUMNY

"Every Indian, be he Hindu or any other, must learn the art of protecting himself. It is the condition of real democracy. The State has a duty. But no State can protect those who will not share with it the duty of protecting themselves."

Q. You did not hesitate to join the Ali Brothers in their intrigue to invite Amanulla Khan to invade India and set up Muslim *Raj*. You drafted a wire for Maulana Mahomed Ali advising the then Amir not to enter into a treaty with the British. The late Swami Shraddhanandji is reported to have seen the draft. And now you want the Hindus of Sind to make a present of their hearths and homes to their Mussalman oppressors instead of demanding the re-amalgamation of Sind with the Bombay Province, which alone can restore the reign of law to Sind. Why won't you realize that in this age of enlightenment and progress, what the minorities expect is effective protection of their due rights, not mere pious counsels of perfection?

A. I have several such letters. Hitherto I have ignored them. But now I see that the news has gone through a revised and enlarged edition in the Hindu Mahasabha. An angry correspondent threatens that persons like him will begin to believe what has been stated so authoritatively. For the sake of my reputation, therefore, I must answer the question. But my correspondents should know that life for me would be a burden if I were to make it a point of controverting every false report about me or distortion of my writing. A reputation that requires such a mud-wall of protection is not worth keeping. So far as the charge of my intriguing with the Amir is concerned, I can say that there is no truth whatsoever in it. Further, I know that the Brothers stoutly denied the charge when it was brought to their notice. And I believed them implicitly. I do not remember having drafted any telegram on behalf of Maulana Mahomed Ali to the then Amir. The alleged

telegram is harmless in itself and does not warrant the deduction drawn from it. The late Swamiji never referred the matter to me for confirmation. It is wrong to say anything against dead men unless one has positive proof and stating it is relevant. The romance has been woven round my writings in *Young India*. Deductions drawn from them are wholly unjustified. I would not be guilty of inviting any power to invade India for the purpose of expelling the English. For one thing, it would be contrary to my creed of non-violence. For another, I have too great a respect for English bravery and arms to think that an invasion of India can be successful without a strong combination of different powers. In any case, I have no desire to substitute British Rule for any other foreign rule. I want unadulterated Home Rule, however inferior in quality it may be. My position remains to-day what it was when I wrote the *Young India* paragraphs¹ now sought to be used against me. Let me further remind the readers that I do not believe in secret methods.

As for Sind, my advice stands. Re-incorporation of Sind in the Bombay Province may or may not be a good proposition on other grounds, but certainly it is not for the purpose of greater protection of life and property. Every Indian, be he Hindu or any other, must learn the art of protecting himself. It is the condition of real democracy. The State has a duty. But no State can protect those who will not share with it the duty of protecting themselves.

¹See *Mahomedan Decision*—p. 20 and *The Non-co-operation Committee*—p. 22.

MY ADVICE TO NOAKHALI HINDUS

**"Self-respect and honour cannot be protected by others.
They are for each individual himself or herself to guard."**

Manoranjan Babu and other friends from Noakhali came to see me during my stay in Malikanda about the difficulties of the Hindus in their locality. Manoranjan Babu has been in correspondence with me in the matter for some time. I have not examined the grievances. I had neither the time nor the wish to do so. That is the special province of the Provincial Congress Committee and finally the central body. But I had no difficulty in giving general advice. Their case is more or less like the Sukkur case. There is a great difference in degree. But I feel sure that no popularly elected government can successfully cope with widespread *goondaism*, as it is alleged to be in Noakhali. It is essentially a case of self-defence. Self-respect and honour cannot be protected by others. They are for each individual himself or herself to guard. Governments can at best punish offenders after the offence has been committed. They cannot assure prevention except in so far as punishment acts as a deterrent. Self-defence can be violent or non-violent. I have always advised and insisted on non-violent defence. But I recognize that it has to be learnt like violent defence. It requires a different training from that which is required for violent defence. Therefore, if the capacity for non-violent self-defence is lacking, there need be no hesitation in using violent means. But Manoranjan Babu being an old Congressman said: "You say I cannot retaliate even in self-defence?" "That is certainly my view," I replied. "There was, however, a resolution passed by the Gaya Congress that the use of force in self-defence was permissible to Congressmen. I have never justified the resolution. Non-violence be-

comes meaningless if violence is permitted for self-defence. What is it but self-defence in national resistance against an aggressor nation? I would, therefore, advise secession from the Congress, if you contemplate the use of force in defending yourself in the circumstances described by you."

"But," said Manoranjan Babu, "supposing I adopt the Gaya resolution, would I be accused of communalism if I defended the aggrieved Hindus?"

"Certainly not," I replied. "In the first place, you do not cease to be Hindu because you are a Congressman. You will, however, be guilty of communalism, if you sided with Hindus right or wrong. In the case in point, you will defend Hindus not because they are Hindus but because they are afflicted. I would expect you to defend Muslims if you found them molested by Hindus. A Congressman recognizes or should recognize no communal distinction."

NON-VIOLENCE DURING RIOTS

"To quell riots non-violently, there must be true *ahimsa* in one's heart, an *ahimsa* that takes even the erring hooligan in its warm embrace. Such an attitude cannot be cultivated. It can only come as a prolonged and patient effort which must be made during peaceful times."

A friend writes :

"How can non-violence be efficacious during riots? By self-immolation we can influence only those with whom we have already established living contacts. But the hooligans who perpetrate violence during riots are, as a rule, hirelings imported from outside. How can they have any scruples about hurting those whom they have never known before and for whom they can have no regard or consideration?"

The question deserves careful consideration. The friend who has put it is a valiant worker who nearly lost his life in trying to do his duty during a riot. I have often written on this question before. The pity of it is that Congressmen have never seriously thought over the question of finding a non-violent way of quelling riots. Their non-violence was restricted to the authorities. In my opinion, the non-violence that goes so far and no further scarcely deserves the name *ahimsa*. You may, if you like, call it unarmed resistance. So far as it is a device for embarrassing the Government, it is a species of *bhimsa*. To quell riots non-violently, there must be true *ahimsa* in one's heart, an *ahimsa* that takes even the erring hooligan in its warm embrace. Such an attitude cannot be cultivated. It can only come as a prolonged and patient effort which must be made during peaceful times. The would-be member of a peace brigade should come into close touch and cultivate acquaintance with the so-called *goonda* element in his vicinity. He should know all and be known to all and win the

hearts of all by his loving and selfless service. No section should be regarded as too contemptible or mean to mix with. *Goondas* do not drop from the sky, nor do they spring from the earth like evil spirits. They are the product of social disorganization, and society is, therefore, responsible for their existence. In other words, they should be looked upon as a symptom of corruption in our body politic. To remove the disease we must first discover the underlying cause. To find the remedy will, then, be a comparatively easy task. So far we have not even attempted a proper beginning. But it is never too late to mend. It is enough that we are at last alive to the necessity of it. We have now to follow it up with prompt action. Let every one who is interested make a prompt beginning in his own neighbourhood. The difficulty mentioned by my correspondent will automatically resolve itself, if we proceed with our effort in the right spirit.

RESIST GOONDAISM IN RIOTS

“To run away from the scene of danger is not manly. I say, it does not become a human being. Dumb cattle run away when they are driven, but even the beasts turn at bay. It behoves us, therefore, not to run away from the scene of strife, but to receive blows calmly and die manfully.”

Addressing the Rashtriya Yuwak Sangh at Wardha, C. P., Gandhiji referred to the recent happenings in Ahmedabad, Dacca, Bihar and Bombay and said :

Congressmen will be extinct if they flee like cowards in the midst of riots. Their first and last duty should be resisting *goondaism* in communal riots, not by violence, but by non-violence for which I have been trying since 1920. It is world's order to punish *goondaism* or arrest it by violence, but I appeal to you all to meet this peacefully and non-violently and justify your existence, and also of the Congress as a national institution. Where is the place for youngmen in all these unfortunate happenings, I ask ? It is the duty of every Indian to ask himself this question.

There are two ways of facing a critical situation like this. One is the traditional method of returning the blow for blow, and the other to take the blows calmly. The first course is universal. But to run away from the scene of danger is not manly. I say, it does not become a human being. Dumb cattle run away when they are driven, but even the beasts turn at bay. It behoves us, therefore, not to run away from the scene of strife, but to receive blows calmly and die manfully. This is the other and superior way of combating the situation. There is a combat even in this sort of non-resistance. But if you cannot resort to this superior method, beat the aggressor to your heart's content. But remember that it is the aggressor with whom you have

to settle accounts. It is inhuman and unmanly to beat others indiscriminately.

A ruffian or a hooligan beats a man. Others, instead of protecting him, take to their heels. I repeat that this is also unmanly. If you cannot stand your ground non-violently, by all means resort to the traditional method of blows. But this is not what I have come to tell you particularly. I want you to develop the ability to adopt the newer and the better method of dying non-violently and valiantly. You may neither return a blow nor run for your life. We have been trying to learn and practise this supreme art for the last 20 years.

Here is a situation which challenges our manhood and our faith in this new art of resistance. I hope that you have been told how to practise this art in times of danger.

The present situation is putting every Congressman to a very severe test. If the Congress fails now, it will have forfeited all claims to exist as a national organization. If Congressmen deny their creed and revert to the old time-worn method, then also the Congress is bound to fail.

In any case, there are only two legitimate courses open to every Indian who prizes his honour and liberty. He must either follow the sublime method of peaceful resistance, or the other method of violent resistance which prevails in the world. These two alone are legitimate and rightful methods. All other courses are illegitimate and even immoral. It is for you to make your choice.

NEEDLESS NERVOUSNESS

“For me, I am positive that neither in the Quran nor in the *Mahabharata* there is any sanction for and approval of the triumph of violence. Though there is repulsion in Nature, she *lives* by attraction.”

I am sorry that I find a nervous fear among some Hindus and Mahomedans that I am undermining their faith and that I am even doing irreparable harm to India by my uncompromising preaching of non-violence. They seem almost to imply that violence is their creed. I touch a tender spot if I talk about extreme non-violence in their presence. They confound me with texts from the *Mahabharata* and the Quran eulogizing or permitting violence. Of the *Mahabharata* I can write without restraint, but the most devout Mahomedan will not, I hope, deny me the privilege of understanding the message of the Prophet. I make bold to say that violence is the creed of no religion and that whereas non-violence in most cases is obligatory in all, violence is merely permissible in some cases. But I have not put before India the final form of non-violence. The non-violence that I have preached from Congress platforms is non-violence as a policy. But even policies require honest adherence in thought, word and deed. If I believe that honesty is the best policy, surely whilst I so believe, I must be honest in thought, word and deed; otherwise I become an impostor. Non-violence being a policy means that it can, upon due notice, be given up when it proves unsuccessful or ineffective. But simple morality demands that whilst a particular policy is pursued, it must be pursued with all one's heart. It is simple policy to march along a certain route, but the soldier who marches with an unsteady step along that route is liable to be summarily dismissed. I become, therefore, incredulous when peo-

ple talk to me sceptically about non-violence or are seized with fright at the very mention of the word non-violence. If they do not believe in the expedient of non-violence, they must denounce it, but not claim to believe in the expedient when their heart resists it. How disastrous it would be, if not believing in violence even as an expedient, I joined, say, a violence party and approached a gun with a perturbed heart! The reader will believe me when I say that I have the capacity for killing a fly. But I do not believe in killing even flies. Now suppose I joined an expedition for fly-killing as an expedient. Will I not be expected, before being permitted to join the expedition, to use all the available engines of destruction whilst I remained in the army of fly-killers?..... Let there be no manner of doubt that *Swaraj* established by non-violent means will be different in kind from the *Swaraj* that can be established by armed rebellion. Police and punishments there will be even under such *Swaraj*. But there would be no room for brutalities such as we witness to-day both on the part of the people and the Government. And those, whether they call themselves Hindus or Mussalmans, who do not fully believe in the policy of non-violence, should abandon both non-cooperation and non-violence.

For me, I am positive that neither in the Quran nor in the *Mahabharata*, there is any sanction for and approval of the triumph of violence. Though there is repulsion enough in Nature, she *lives* by attraction. Mutual love enables Nature to persist. Man does not live by destruction. Self-love compels regard for others. Nations cohere because there is mutual regard among the individuals composing them. Some day we must extend the national law to the universe, even as we have extended the family law to form nations—a larger family. God has ordained that India should be such a nation. For, so far as reason can perceive, India cannot become free by armed rebellion for generations. India can become free by refraining from national violence. India has now become tired of rule based upon violence. That to me is the message of the plains. The people of the plains do not know

what it is to put up an organized armed fight. And they must become free, for they want freedom. They have realized that power seized by violence will only result in their greater grinding.

Such, at any rate, is the reasoning that has given birth to the policy, not the *dharmā*, of non-violence. And even as a Mussalman or a Hindu believing in violence applies the creed of non-violence in his family, so are both called upon without question to apply the policy of non-violence in their mutual relations and in their relation to other races and classes, not excluding Englishmen. Those who do not believe in this policy and do not wish to live up to it in full, retard the movement by remaining in it.

IMPLICATIONS OF NON-VIOLENCE

“He who has a living faith in God will not do evil deeds with the name of God on his lips. He will not rely on the sword, but will rely solely on God. . . . The true man of God has the strength to use the sword, but will not use it knowing that every man is the image of God.”

Replying to the address of welcome by the students of the Islamia College, Peshawar, Gandhiji said:

It is well that you referred to the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity, and I would ask you to consider what you can do in furtherance of that great cause. There is no doubt that the work belongs essentially to you of the younger generation. We are now getting old and will soon be gathered to our fathers. You have, therefore, to shoulder the burden. How you can help in achieving the great object you have yourselves shown in your address by your appreciative reference to non-violence and to Khan Saheb's¹ work. I do not know if your reference was deliberate and if you knew the full implication of what you were saying. I do hope you knew what you were saying and that you fully weighed your words. If you have, then I should like to take you a step further. An Urdu newspaper has said that my mission in the Frontier Province is the emasculation of the Pathans. Whereas Khan Saheb has invited me here in order that the Pathans might hear the message of non-violence from my own lips, and in order that I might see the *Khudai Khidmatgars* at close quarters and find out to what extent non-violence has permeated them. That means that the Khan Saheb at any rate has no such fear as has been expressed by that Urdu paper. For, he knows that true non-violence is mightier than the mightiest violence.

¹ Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

If, therefore, you really know the essential nature of non-violence, and appreciate Khan Saheb's work, you will have to pledge yourselves to non-violence, and that in spite of the fact that violence is so much in the air and we are talking day in and day out of military manœuvres and aerial action, armaments and naval strength. You have to realize that the power of unarmed non-violence is any day far superior to that of armed force. With me acceptance of non-violence was instinctive, it was part of my training and home influence in childhood. Its superior strength I came to realize in South Africa where I had to pit it against organized violence and racial prejudice. I returned from South Africa with a clear conviction of the superiority of the method of non-violence to that of violence.

If the method of violence takes plenty of training, the method of non-violence takes even more training, and that training is much more difficult than the training for violence. The first essential of that training is a living faith in God. He who has a living faith in God will not do evil deeds with the name of God on his lips. He will not rely on the sword, but will rely solely on God. But you may say that a coward may also pass off as a believer in God, saying he does not use the sword. Cowardice is no sign of belief in God. The true man of God has the strength to use the sword, but will not use it knowing that every man is the image of God.

Islam, it is said, believes in the brotherhood of man. But you will permit me to point out that it is not the brotherhood of Mussalmans only, but it is universal brotherhood, and that brings me to the second essential of the training for non-violence. The *Allah* of Islam is the same as the God of Christians and the *Ishwara* of Hindus. Even as there are numerous names of God in Hinduism, there are as many names of God in Islam. The names do not indicate individuality but attributes, and little man has tried in his humble way to describe mighty God by giving Him attributes, though He is above all attributes, Indescribable, Inconceivable, Immeasurable. Living faith in this God means acceptance

of the brotherhood of mankind. It also means equal respect for all religions. If Islam is dear to you, Hinduism is dear to me and Christianity is dear to the Christians. It would be the height of intolerance—and intolerance is a species of violence—to believe that your religion is superior to other religions and that you would be justified in wanting others to change over to your faith.

The third essential is the acceptance of truth and purity, for one claiming to have an active faith in God cannot but be pure and truthful.

Now let me tell you that your appreciation of Khan Sahab's services and of non-violence carries all these implications, if the appreciation is genuine.

Those who claim to lead have to live up to all the implications and express them in their daily life. Now, you will not be the rank and file, but you will be leaders of your people. If you can live up to the ideal, you may be sure that no one will have any excuse for saying that non-violence is going to emasculate you. Yours will be the non-violence of the bravest.

AM I A MESSENGER OF GOD?

“Live and let live for mutual forbearance and toleration is the law of life. That is the lesson I have learnt from the Quran, the Bible, the Zend Avesta and the Gita.”

A Muslim friend writes a long letter which pruned down reads as follows :

“The chief difficulty that stands in your way of right thinking is that your heart has so hardened by looking at and interpreting things in the light of your self-assumed principles, that you cannot bring to bear an open mind on anything, howsoever valuable it may be.

“If God has not appointed you as His messenger, what you say or teach cannot be claimed to be a word of God. No one would contest the truthfulness of truth and non-violence as teachings of the prophets and principles of very high spiritual value, but their true understanding and application require a soul that is in direct communion with God. Any person who has only polished his soul by suppressing or acting against the desires and cravings of the flesh and the self is not a prophet.

“The fact that you stand as a teacher of the world and claim to have diagnosed the disease from which the world is suffering, and proclaim that the truth of your choice and practice and the non-violence of your conviction and application are the only cures for the afflicted world, betrays your utter disregard and misconception of the truth. You admit you make mistakes. Your non-violence is actually a concealed violence as it is not based on actual spiritual life and is not the earnest of true inspiration from God.

“As a true believer, and in pursuance of that teaching of Islam which enjoins on every Muslim to convey the truth to every human being, I would request you to clear your mind of all complexes, to place yourself in the position of an ordinary human being who wants to learn and not to teach and to become a real seeker after truth.

“If you wish to find out the truth, I would request you to study the Quran and the life of the Prophet Mahomed (Peace of God be upon him) written by Shibli Nomani and M. Sulaiman Nadwi with an open mind.

“As for unity among the different communities inhabiting

India, it can never come in terms of a single nation. Broad-minded toleration of each other's religion and practices and an agreement based on the recognition of the Muslims as a nation with their own complete code of life and culture to guide them and an equality of status in political life, shall bring harmony and peace to India."

I have omitted no argument used by the writer.

I have not hardened my heart. I have never claimed to be a messenger of God except in the sense in which all human beings are. I am a mortal as liable to err as any other. Nor have I claimed to be a teacher. But I cannot prevent admirers from calling me a teacher or a *Mahatma*, as I cannot prevent traducers from calling me all sorts of names and ascribing to me vices to which I am a stranger. I lay both praise and blame at the feet of the Almighty and go my way.

For the information of my correspondent, who is a school-master in a high school, I may say that I have reverently studied the works he mentions and also many other works on Islam. I have more than once read the Quran. My religion enables me, obliges me, to imbibe all that is good in all the great religions of the earth. This does not mean that I must accept the interpretation that my correspondent may put upon the message of the Prophet of Islam or any other Prophet. I must use the limited intelligence that God has given me to interpret the teachings bequeathed to mankind by the Prophets of the world. I am glad to find that my correspondent agrees that truth and non-violence are taught by the Holy Quran. Surely it is for him, as for every one of us, to apply these principles to daily life according to the light given to us by God.

The last paragraph in the letter lays down a dangerous doctrine. Why is India not one nation? Was it not one during, say, the Moghul period? Is India composed of two nations? If it is, why only two? Are not Christians a third, Parsis a fourth, and so on? Are the Muslims of China a nation separate from the other Chinese? Are the Muslims of England a different nation from the other English? How are the Muslims of the Punjab

different from the Hindus and the Sikhs? Are they not all Punjabis, drinking the same water, breathing the same air and deriving sustenance from the same soil? What is there to prevent them from following their respective religious practices? Are Muslims all the world over a separate nation? Or, are the Muslims of India only to be a separate nation distinct from the others? Is India to be vivisected into two parts, one Muslim and the other non-Muslim? And what is to happen to the handful of Muslims living in the numerous villages where the population is predominantly Hindu, and conversely to the Hindus where, as in the Frontier Province or Sind, they are a handful? The way suggested by the correspondent is the way of strife. Live and let live for mutual forbearance and toleration is the law of life. That is the lesson I have learnt from the Quran, the Bible, the Zend Avesta and the Gita.

OPINIONS DIFFER

"The proposal to vivisect India is a contribution to imperialistic growth. For vivisection can only be made by the aid of the British bayonet or through a deadly civil war. I hope the Congress will be party to neither game."

An M. A. of Aligarh writes :

"You have said on many occasions that your study of the Holy Quran has revealed to you that Islam enjoins non-violence upon its followers. You again say that your study of the life of the Holy Prophet confirms you in this belief. Allow me to say that it must be only a sort of 'wishful' reading that you have done. The simple fact is that your philosophy of *ahimsa* eschews the use of force altogether. Islam, on the contrary, does allow the use of force on certain occasions. Did not the Prophet meet force with force at Badr? I dare not cite any authority because you have refused to accept any interpretation except your own. Yet I hope you will show some respect to what your own hypnotized Maulana Sahab said so long ago as during the first Non-co-operation movement.¹ He said in his statement to the court : 'I do not agree with Mahatma Gandhi that the use of force should not be allowed in any case. Because I am a Muslim I believe that the use of force is allowed on the particular occasions specified by Islam.' Again, he said in the same statement to the court

¹*The following extract is taken from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's statement to the court as it appeared in Young India of Feb. 23, 1922 :*

"Unlike Mahatma Gandhi, my belief is not that armed force should never be opposed by armed force. It is my belief that such opposing of violence with violence is fully in harmony with the natural laws of God in those circumstances under which Islam permits the use of such violence. But at the same time, for purposes of liberation of India and the present agitation, I entirely agree with all the arguments of Mahatma Gandhi and I have complete confidence in his honesty. It is my definite conviction that India cannot attain success by means of arms, nor is it advisable for it to adopt that course. India can only triumph through non-violent agitation and India's triumph will be a *memorable example of the victory of moral force.*"

during his trial: 'Against the non-Muslim Government, Islam prescribes only sword, protracted battle and the cutting of throats.' I am sure Maulana Saheb cannot deny it even to-day.

"So much for non-violence in Islam. As to the question whether the Muslims are a separate nation or not, I would say that the Muslims have been a separate nation ever since the beginning of Islam. They were so when Mahomed-bin-Kasim first set foot on Indian soil, they were so during the days of the Moghul Empire, they are so even to-day, and they will remain the same for ever if they are true to their religion. Akbar attempted to evolve not only a common religion but also a common social system, but were not his attempts doomed to failure? The Muslims are a separate nation in the sense that they cannot merge their identity with any other community. But this need not frighten the champions of unity at all. Co-operation in some particular sphere for some particular goal is always possible. Breathing the same air and inhabiting the same land does not make a nation. It is the unity of thought that really matters. It is religion which moulds the mind. A Muslim may be the next-door neighbour of a Sikh. But their view-points, their modes of thought and their modes of life will always differ from each other. The air is the same all round the globe. Is the air of England in any way different from that of India? Physical surroundings affect only the physical features. The mind is not affected by them. Of course, the Christians are also a separate nation, and so are the Parsis. India is a land of nationalities. It will be a red-letter day in the history of India when the Indian National Congress is transformed into a 'Federation of Indian Nations.'

"Yes, the Muslims are a separate nation in China. If the insinuation is that they merged themselves with the other Chinese, then I can only say that they stand as an object-lesson before the whole Islamic world. Islamic brotherhood will be reduced to a mere farce if the same process continues. Islam has definitely laid down that the Muslims should have some distinction even in their dress. Does not Maulana Saheb stand prominent among the members of the Congress Working Committee?"

I have no doubt that this letter represents the present mood of many educated Muslims. I do not propose to enter into any long argument about the interpretation of the Q'uran. Being a non-Muslim, I am at a disadvantage. If I began an argument, the natural retort would be: 'How can you, a non-Muslim, interpret Muslim scriptures?' It would serve no purpose to answer back that I have the same reverence for Islam and the other faiths as I have for my own.

I may, however, inform my correspondent that I had before my mind the battle of Badr and similar incidents in the Prophet's life. I was aware of verses in the Quran itself contradicting my interpretation. I suggest, nevertheless, that it is possible that the teaching of a book or a man's life may be different from isolated texts in a book or incidents in a life, however many the latter may be. The *Mahabharata* is the story of a bloody war. But I have maintained in the teeth of orthodox Hindu opposition that it is a book written to establish the futility of war and violence.

I have no right to speak for the Maulana Saheb. He is well able to take care of himself. I must confess that I have no recollection of the Maulana Saheb having given the evidence quoted. I do not question the veracity of my correspondent. Only, that evidence does not affect the opinion I have held for many years about the central teaching of the Holy Quran. Opinions will differ to the end of time. I plead for mutual forbearance.

The proposition laid down by my correspondent about nations is startling. There may be arguable grounds for maintaining that Muslims in India are a separate nation. But I have never heard it said that there are as many nations as there are religions on earth. If there are, it would follow that a man changes his nationality when he changes his faith. According to my correspondent English, Egyptians, Americans, Japanese, etc., are not nations, but Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, Jews, Buddhists are different nations, no matter where born. I am afraid my correspondent occupies very weak ground in maintaining that nations are or should be divided according to their religions. In his zeal to maintain an untenable proposition, he has overproved his case.

I must deny that the Muslim dynasties divided India into two nations. Akbar's example is irrelevant. He aimed at a fusion of religions. It was a dream not to be realized. But the other Muslim emperors and kings, surely, regarded India as one indivisible whole. That is how I learnt history as a boy.

If we Hindus, Muslims and others are to evolve democracy, we shall do so only by the whole nation speaking its mind through its representatives elected under the broadest franchise possible, and that either through British good-will or in the teeth of its opposition. The pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government give no promise of British good-will. British Imperialism is still vigorous and, in spite of Sir Samuel Hoare's declaration to the contrary, it will die hard. The proposal to vivisect India is a contribution to imperialistic growth. For vivisection can only be made by the aid of the British bayonet or through a deadly civil war. I hope the Congress will be party to neither game. British refusal to make the required declaration of Britain's war aims about India has, perhaps, come as a blessing in disguise. It removes the Congress out of the way to enable the Muslim League to make its choice, unfettered by the Congress administration in eight provinces, as to whether it will keep the British yoke by vivisecting India or whether it will fight for the independence of an undivided India. I hope that the League does not want to vivisect India. I hope that my correspondent does not represent a large body of Muslim opinion in India. Presently, the talks between Janab Jinnah Saheb and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will be resumed. Let us hope that they will result in producing a basis for a lasting solution of the communal tangle.

NON-VIOLENCE, ISLAM AND SIKHISM

"Religions are meant to tame our savage nature, not to let it loose. God is only one, though He has countless names."

Q. By teaching respect for all religions you want to undermine the power of Islam. You want to emasculate the Pathans by taking away the rifle from them. There can be no meeting ground between us and you.

A. I do not know what you thought during the *Khilafat* days. Let me give you a bit of the history of our own times. The foundation of the *Khilafat* struggle was laid by me. I had a hand in the agitation for the release of the Ali Brothers. So when they came out they, together with Khwaja Abdul Majid Shuaib Qureshi and Moazam Ali, and I met together and devised the plan of action which the world knows. I discussed with them the implications of non-violence and told them that, if they could not accept non-violence as true Muslims, I should be out of the picture. Their reason was satisfied, but they said they could not act without endorsement from Muslim divines, and so there was a conference of the *Ulemas* at the late Principal Rudra's house, where I used to stay, when in Delhi, during his life-time. This learned company included, among several others, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the late Maulana Abdul Bari. Led by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad they held that belief in non-violence was not only not inconsistent with Islam, but it was obligatory in the sense that Islam had always preferred it to violence. It is noteworthy that this took place before the acceptance of non-violence by the Congress in 1920. Many were the discourses given by learned Muslims on non-violence before crowded Muslim meetings. The Sikhs, too, came in later without any scruples and they listened with rapt attention to my exposition of non-violence. Those were great and glorious days. Non-violence proved infectious.

Under its spell, there was a mass awakening such as had never been seen before in this land. All communities felt as one, and they thought that non-violence had clothed them with an irresistible power. Those halcyon days are gone and now I am obliged seriously to answer questions like the above. I cannot give you the faith in non-violence you do not possess. God alone can give it to you. Mine remains unshaken. I do maintain, in spite of you and others like you suspecting my motives, that mutual respect for one another's religions is inherent in a peaceful society. Free impact of ideas is impossible on any other condition. Religions are meant to tame our savage nature, not to let it loose. God is only one, though He has countless names. Don't you expect me to respect your faith? If you do, may I not expect the same respect from you for mine? You say Muslims have nothing in common with Hindus. In spite of your separatism, the world is moving towards universal brotherhood when mankind will be one nation. Neither you nor I can stop the march towards our common destiny. As for the emasculation of Pathans, let Badshah Khan¹ answer. He had accepted non-violence before we met. He believes that the Pathan has no future save through non-violence. Without it, if nothing else, his blood-feuds will keep him from going forward. And he thinks that the Pathan found his feet in the Frontier Province after he accepted non-violence and became servant of God—*Khudai Khidmatgar*.

¹Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

IS ISLAM INSPIRED ?

"I certainly regard Islam as one of the inspired religions, and, therefore, the Holy Quran as an inspired book and Mahomed as one of the prophets. But even so I regard Hinduism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism as inspired religions."

A writer in a Muslim paper has suggested that, if I regard Islam as an inspired religion and Mahomed as the Prophet of God, I should declare my belief, so that Musalmans' doubts may be dispelled and Hindu-Muslim unity may possibly be more easily achieved. I read the suggestion about a month ago, but I did not think it necessary to respond to it. But as now-a-days I read as many Muslim papers as I can, in order to acquaint myself with the Muslim mind, and as I find them so full of poison and conscious or unconscious untruths, I feel it necessary to re-declare my opinion about Islam, though I think it is well known. I certainly regard Islam as one of the inspired religions, and, therefore, the Holy Quran as an inspired book and Mahomed as one of the prophets. But even so I regard Hinduism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism as inspired religions. The names of many of them have been already forgotten, for the simple reason that those religions and those prophets related to the particular ages for which and peoples for whom they flourished. Some principal religions are still extant. After a study of those religions, to the extent it was possible for me, I have come to the conclusion that, if it is proper and necessary to discover an underlying unity among all religions, a master-key is needed. That master-key is that of truth and non-violence. When I unlock the chest of a religion with this master-key, I do not find it difficult to discover its likeness with other religions. When you look at these religions as so many leaves of a tree they seem so different, but at the trunk they are one. Unless and until we realize this fun-

damental unity, wars in the name of religion will not cease. These are not confined to Hindus and Mussalmans' alone. The pages of world history are soiled with the bloody accounts of these religious wars. Religion can be defended only by the purity of its adherents and their good deeds, never by their quarrels with those of other faiths.

I WONDER

"It will be an evil day if the reading and interpreting of religious books are to be confined only to those who wear particular religious labels. ... No one has a monopoly of truth. All truth represented by imperfect humans that we are is relative. We can each act according to our lights. God alone knows the reality."

"For some time, you seem to have made it a point to strengthen your arguments in favour of non-violence by frequent but invariably vague references to the Holy Quran and the teachings of Islam. It is quite obvious that you only seek to impress the Muslims thereby. No doubt, your right to preach your cherished doctrine is beyond all question. Similarly, it is quite understandable that you should pat the fifth columnist Mussalmans like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Abul Kalam Azad on the back. But can't you realize that nothing can offend the religious susceptibilities of a Mussalman more than to see a non-Muslim citing the scripture for his own purpose? Well, the Mussalmans have had thirteen centuries to know what the Quran teaches and to practise what it means. The Muslims, of course, do not need a *Mahatma* to interpret their own Holy Book. It would be better, indeed, if you take it from the Muslims what they have throughout the last thirteen centuries believed to be the teachings of their religion, rather than indulge in your own wishful interpretation. I hope you realize full well that you, as well as your Muslim satellites, have entirely forfeited the confidence of the Mussalmans. Your references to the Quran are futile, except that they cause the greatest provocation to the Muslims. Muslims have always shown themselves self-respecting enough not to allow their Holy Book becoming an instrument in non-Muslim hands. Your flattering words about Islam are of no avail. The fact stands out that you are a non-Muslim. Hence, the Quran cannot be the source of your ideas and ideals. You only turn to the Quran afterwards in order to popularize them among the Muslims. It is my friendly advice to you to stop forthwith all reference to the Quran. In the meantime, I would ask you to read what Abul Kalam wrote before he reconciled himself to be the Quisling of Muslim India."

This letter is from an M. A. (Aligarh). He is a re-

search scholar in the Muslim University. The letter was received some time ago. I kept it in my file so long, for I was debating whether it would serve the cause of unity to publish it. But having received another from the same friend more unbalanced than this one, I decided to publish the foregoing in order to enable me to expostulate with those who, in Aligarh or outside, hold views similar to the writer's.

I have sweet memories of Aligarh. I have more than once visited the great University. I have still associations with it. I think I am an honorary member of their club. I received the honour at the hands of the late Dr. Sir Ross Masood when he was Vice-Chancellor of the University. As for the Holy Quran, it was my Muslim clients and friends in South Africa who invited me to read it. They furnished me with Islamic literature. On my return to India, Muslim friends sent me copies of translations of the Holy Book. Among the senders was Dr. Mahomed Ali, himself a translator, and the late Mr. Pickthall also a translator of the book. I was presented by the late Hakim Sahab Ajmal Khan with Maulana Shibli's translation. Have I changed or have the times so changed that it has become a crime for a non-Muslim like me to read and even dare to put his own interpretation upon the Quran? Many pious Muslims have remarked that I am a better Muslim than most Muslims in that I act in the spirit of the Quran and know more of the life of the Prophet than most Muslims. Whose testimony am I to accept—these Muslim friends' or the research scholar's and of those who think like him? I wonder.

The research scholar is right in imputing to me the desire to read my meaning into the Quran. Surely, there is no harm in it so long as I remain absolutely faithful to the text and approach my task with a prayerful and open mind. My correspondent should know, as a scholar, that an interpretation of a life or a book is not necessarily correct because it has been handed down for generations. An error does not cease to be one after a given number of repetitions by a given number of men for a given number of years. The Biblical texts are still being corrected. And

many good Christians believe that the Christianity of the West is a negation of Christ's central teaching. It is just possible that the research scholar's views about the qualifications required for reading and interpreting the Quran and his own interpretation are wrong, and that my being a non-Muslim is no bar to my reading the Quran or interpreting it. And, it is not at all impossible that my interpretation may be found to be right. It will be an evil day if the reading and interpreting of religious books are to be confined only to those who wear particular religious labels. I ask my correspondent and his companions, as their friend, to shed what, in my opinion, is their gross intolerance and give the same credit to others for seeing truth as they claim for themselves. No one has a monopoly of truth. All truth represented by imperfect humans that we are is relative. We can each act according to our lights. God alone knows the reality. That being so, it behoves research scholars at least to be humble and tolerant. Fanaticism and intolerance can neither conduce to research work, nor advance the cause they represent.

MY SIN

"Every act of purification in any sect or community promotes the well-being of the whole, of which they form a part, and, therefore, deserves encouragement from all platforms."

The following is a summary of a long indictment from a Muslim official of a Punjab Congress Committee:

"Your public statements show that you are deeply distressed over the differences among the major communities of India. Apart from the natural fear of the Mussalmans of a dominant majority at the Centre, it is chiefly your personality which is forcing the Mussalmans to ally themselves with the imperialist Government and thus array themselves against the Congress. The student of current events has to thank you for driving the brave and liberty-loving Mussalmans into the reactionary fold.

"You claim that 'from its very commencement the Congress has been a wholly political organization and never communal. It has proved its claim repeatedly and on every relevant occasion.' You have written: 'The Congress has refused to represent any but the national cause.' Of course, the Indian National Congress was organized as a non-communal body for the political emancipation of India. But when you say that 'if untouchability exists Hinduism cannot survive,' you admit that the uplift of the Harijans is a purely Hindu cause and is a question of the life and death of Hinduism. In spite of this, for the twenty years of your life in India, you have used the Congress platform for the removal of untouchability and have included it in the constructive programme of the Congress. The Mussalmans do not grudge you the right to work for the uplift of the Harijans, provided it is on a separate platform. But why should you include, what you yourself admit to be a purely Hindu cause, in the constructive programme of the Congress?.....You have thus made the background of the Congress so aggressively Hindu that it requires little effort to keep the Mussalmans away from the Congress....The misfortune is that most of the Congressmen have been infused with the same narrow-mindedness and indiscretion as have characterized your leadership. To most of them, freedom of India means going back to an age 2,500 years old and thrusting their religion and culture on eight crores of unwilling Mussalmans....

"But the communal question, seen from the right perspective, is not as insoluble as it appears to be. Even now prudence coupled with large-heartedness may undo the wrong done to the cause of national unity.

"The Constituent Assembly is not only an expedient for the political problem facing India, but is under the present circumstances the best and the only way out of the communal muddle... But an article from your pen in *Harijan* is not sufficient. It is necessary to incorporate in the resolution on the Constituent Assembly a clear-worded clause assuring the Mussalmans that their representatives to the said Assembly would be elected on separate electorates, and that regarding matters relating to their religion and culture the decision of a two-third majority of their representatives would be accepted without hitch or hindrance.

"Then, again, a mere resolution passed to the above effect would not suffice. It would be necessary to carry on continuous, systematic and intensive propaganda in order to bring home to every Mussalman the implication of the Constituent Assembly, especially of the clause dealing with the election and powers of the representatives of the Mussalmans. Only in this way can the Congress gain the confidence of the Mussalman masses, and cut the ground from under the feet of those who try to mislead them by creating the bogey of their religion and culture being in danger.

"India can free itself the very day the Congress succeeds in winning the confidence of the Mussalmans. Britain dare not hold in bondage a united India. Therefore, the fight for freedom should take the form of adopting measures for and putting into practice the ideal of Hindu-Muslim unity.

"Perhaps, one thing has become clear to you now, namely that Hindu-Muslim unity cannot come about by negotiating with the Muslim League or any other organization."

I have left out nothing relevant from the letter. The charge coming from a responsible Congressman is amazing. The programme of non-co-operation was passed in consultation with the Ali Brothers and at a time when the Congress had the full-hearted co-operation of the most influential Muslims. The programme contained removal of untouchability by Hindus. Should not non-Hindus rejoice in the purification of Hinduism? Why may not the Congress allow and encourage social and religious reform from the Congress platform? Non-violent politics cannot be divorced from moral uplift. And why does the correspondent forget that *Khilafat* itself was a purely

religious cause? There were non-Congress Hindus then, as there are now, who thought and think that it was a grave mistake made by the Congress in taking up the *Khilafat* wrong. I have no doubt whatsoever as to the correctness of the Congress step. And if a similar thing occurred again, I should not hesitate to give my life in aiding my Muslim brethren. "A friend in need is a friend indeed." I hope, therefore, that my correspondent and those who think like him will correct their thought and believe with me that every act of purification in any sect or community promotes the well-being of the whole, of which they form a part, and, therefore, deserves encouragement from all platforms.

As to the Constituent Assembly, everything the correspondent says has been conceded by the Congress. Propaganda is also going on. But Congressmen, and especially Congress Muslims, may not sit with folded hands and expect the Working Committee to carry on the work. The Working Committee's function is to supervise, guide and advise the organization and to administer its routine work. But propaganda can only be carried on if thousands of Congressmen interest themselves in it. If the programme mapped by the Congress is insipid, Congressmen can turn out the present guides in a moment. This is true especially because the Congress has accepted non-violence as its policy. Its success is dependent on the whole-hearted co-operation of every single Congressman. In that sense, the Congress is the largest instrument of political education in the country. Every one who comes on the Congress register becomes a candidate for political education. There should be a hand-book to impart such education. And since many Congressmen are illiterate, it might be necessary to take up adult literacy and have a special department for carrying on the work. I commend this suggestion to my correspondent for adoption. He can commence with his own district in which he is vice-president. Let him not distrust members of the Muslim League. They are both his countrymen and co-religionists. We need not be one another's enemies because we have different ideas or different policies.

ON BEHALF OF HUMANITY

"I am not aware of having done a single thing in my life as a matter of expedience. I have ever held that the highest morality is also the highest expedience."

Answering a Mussalman friend at the Harijan workers' meeting at Raipur as to why he, a national leader, had chosen for the time being to work only among a section of the nation, Gandhiji said:

I am trying to serve all communities to-day through this work. They are branches of one big family. I have found in the Hindu branch a disease which, if not removed in time, will spread through the whole family and destroy it. The evil of untouchability has travelled far beyond its prescribed limits. In trying to root out untouchability among Hindus, I am trying to serve all the communities. Though the method of achieving communal unity through conferences has failed, I have not despaired of a heart-unity being achieved in the end. God has sent me this work and I am doing it in the faith that the way to a real communal unity will be paved through it. It is thus, to my mind, a service of the whole nation. The effort I made in 1920-21 to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity, will go down to history and will serve as the foundation of the edifice of communal unity, whenever it is achieved. I have never repented for having made that effort. For me, it was not a matter of expedience. I am not aware of having done a single thing in my life as a matter of expedience. I have ever held that the highest morality is also the highest expedience. Some European friends assure me that I am waging this war against untouchability on behalf of the whole of humanity. Once this canker is removed from Hinduism, Hindus, Mussalmans and others will sink their differences and will embrace one another as blood-brothers, and all communities will feel that they are all branches of the same tree.

ALLEPPEY SPEECH

"I ask you to believe me implicitly when I say that, if untouchability is removed, it must result in bringing all Indians together and, if I may say in all humility, all humanity nearer. It is not a small movement, but a big movement fraught with great consequences."

Replying to the charge at a public meeting that his attempt to remove the evil of untouchability was but to strengthen the Hindu religion, Gandhiji said:

I must tell these friends that my present attempt has nothing to do with the strengthening of Hinduism. I ask you to take me at my word when I say that I am wholly indifferent whether Hindu religion is strengthened or weakened or perishes; that is to say, I have so much faith in the correctness of the position I have taken up that, if my taking up that position results in weakening Hinduism, I cannot help it and I must not care. I tell you what I want to do with Hindu religion. I want to purify it of the sin of untouchability. I want to exorcise the devil of untouchability which has to-day distorted and disfigured Hinduism out of all recognition. I know that, if this evil can be removed root and branch, those very friends who say religion is the greatest obstacle to the progress of India will immediately change their minds. But, if it is any consolation to these friends, I tell them that, if I came to the conclusion that Hinduism sanctioned untouchability, I should denounce it. But even then I would not go so far with them as to say that religion itself is useless, and that God is not God but devil. For me, the result will be that I shall lose faith in Hindus and Hinduism, but my faith in God will be strengthened. And I want to tell you why it will be strengthened. Faith is not a delicate flower which would wither under the slightest stormy weather. Faith is like the Himalaya mountains which

cannot possibly change. No storm can possibly remove the Himalaya mountains from their foundations. I am daily praying for strength from God to be able to say to God, when Hindus disappoint me: 'Although Thy own creation has disappointed me, I still cling to Thee as a babe clings to the mother's breast.' And I want every one of you to cultivate that faith in God and religion. It is my conviction that all the great faiths of the world are true, are God-ordained and that they serve the purpose of God and of those who have been brought up in those surroundings and those faiths. I do not believe that the time will ever come when we shall be able to say there is only one religion in the world. In a sense, even to-day there is one fundamental religion in the world. But there is no such thing as a straight line in Nature. Religion is one tree with many branches. As branches you may say religions are many; as tree religion is one.

What is at the bottom of this movement for purification in Hinduism? It is not designed as a movement hostile to any religion. It is designed to bring all faiths nearer together. Do you for one moment suppose that, if *savarna* Hindus make reparation in the terms that I have suggested, and if they forget the distinctions of high and low, they will forget those distinctions only in regard to Harijans and not in regard to others? To-day, this poison of untouchability has overtaken the whole of Indian society. Harijans are not the only untouchables. They are on the extreme fringe. But all Hindus are untouchable to themselves, and all Hindus to non-Hindus. Non-Hindus have noted this fact; and I suggest to you that our differences and quarrels to-day have their main root in this canker of untouchability. I ask you to believe me implicitly when I say that, if untouchability is removed, it must result in bringing all Indians together and, if I may say in all humility, all humanity nearer. It is not a small movement, but a big movement fraught with great consequences. Can you imagine that, if it were otherwise, as a wise man, which I consider myself to be, I would ceaselessly wander from place to place in the evening of my life to deliver a message which has the consequence

of strengthening Hindus for fighting against Mussalmans. Christians, Jews and Parsis, among whom I have friends as dear as blood-brothers? I have that implicit faith in my mission that, if it succeeds—as it will succeed, it is bound to succeed—history will record it as a movement designed to knit all people in the world together, not as hostile to one another, but as parts of one whole.

TOWARDS THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

"In dealing with the monster of untouchability, my own innermost desire is not that the brotherhood of Hindus only may be achieved, but it essentially is that the brotherhood of man—the Hindu, Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Jew—may be realized."

Speaking at a public meeting at Trichinopoly, Gandhiji said:

Among the addresses that I have received here, I find one from my Mussalman friends. After saying many complimentary things about me, the address thus concludes:

"A soul (who is) more devoted to public cause and who always considers the good of others better than his own, cannot be found than in you. You are the only leader now and there is no one else. Hence, we pray that you give us on this occasion such consolation of our realizing our cherished hopes of your taking up the work of uplifting, not only the cause of all the Hindus and Christians, but also of us, Mahomedans, in a word, the Public Cause, *i.e.*, of our people getting their rights of citizenship and of their being saved from their economic bondage."

I may, in answer, give this absolute assurance not only to these Mussalman friends, but through them to all whom it may concern, that in the evening of my life I am not likely to take up a sectional cause to the injury of the public cause. And if, at the present moment, I appear to be advocating a sectional cause, you may depend upon it that behind that sectional cause lies deep down the desire that the whole of the public may benefit by it. For I do not believe that life is divided into separate air-tight compartments. On the contrary, it is an undivided and indivisible whole; and, therefore, what is or may be good for one must be good for all. Whatever activity fails to stand that unmistakable test is an activity that must be abjured by all who have the public weal at heart.

Having throughout my life believed in this doctrine of universal good, never have I taken up any activity—be it sectional or national—which would be detrimental to the good of humanity as a whole. And in pursuing that universal goal, I discovered years ago that untouchability, as it is practised to-day among Hindus, is a hindrance not only to the march of Hindus towards their own good, but also a hindrance to the general good of all. He who runs may discover for himself how this untouchability has taken in its snaky coil not merely caste-Hindus, but all other communities representing different faiths in India, that is to say, Mussalmans, Christians and others. In dealing with the monster of untouchability, my own innermost desire is not that the brotherhood of Hindus only may be achieved, but it essentially is that the brotherhood of man—be he Hindu, Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Jew—may be realized. For I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are all God-given, and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that, if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the stand-point of the followers of those faiths, we should find that they were at bottom all one and were all helpful to one another.

Hence it is that I have not hesitated to ask all non-Hindus to help me with their prayer in this mission, and it is because I have a living faith in my mission and because that faith is based on an extensive experience that I have not hesitated to say with the greatest deliberation that, if we, Hindus, do not destroy this monster of untouchability, it will devour both Hindus and Hinduism. And when I ask you to purify your hearts of untouchability, I ask of you nothing less than this—that you should believe in the fundamental unity and equality of man. I invite you all to forget that there are any distinctions of high and low among the children of one and the same God.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"I have no doubt whatsoever that the truest memorial to his (Maulana Shaukat Ali's) memory will be a joint determination on the part of both the communities to bring about not a paper-unity but a heart-unity, based not on suspicion and distrust but on mutual trust. No other unity is worth having. And without that unity there is no real freedom for India."

I read suggestions about a memorial to the late Maulana Shaukat Ali. As soon as I learnt about the wholly unexpected death, I wrote to some Muslim friends sharing with them my innermost thoughts. One of them writes thus:

"There can be no two opinions about the extreme urgency and essential necessity of a sincere and lasting Hindu-Muslim unity. And the sooner it is brought about, the better it will be for all concerned. Delay in this matter can only be fraught with consequences which nobody can contemplate without serious concern. The present drift may lead to most tragic developments which must, if at all possible, be avoided. I know that Shaukat was in his own way genuinely anxious to bring about real Hindu-Muslim understanding, and nothing will please his spirit more than to know in its rest in heaven that one of the objects after which he strove in this world was at last achieved. There may be people who may doubt this, but knowing him and the working of his mind most intimately as I do, I can assert it with confidence."

I entirely endorse the opinion that, in spite of his outbursts at times to the contrary, deep down in the Maulana was the same longing for peace for which he used to speak and work eloquently during the *Khilafat* days. I have no doubt whatsoever that the truest memorial to his memory will be a joint determination on the part of both the communities to bring about not a paper-unity but a heart-unity, based not on suspicion and distrust but on mutual trust. No other unity is worth having. And without that unity there is no real freedom for India.

THE ABBOTTABAD SPEECH

"If you could dissect my heart, you would find that the prayer and spiritual striving for the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity goes on there unceasingly all the twenty-four hours without even a moment's interruption, whether I am awake or asleep. I want Hindu-Muslim unity if only because I know that without it there can be no *Swaraj*."

In the course of a speech at a public meeting, Gandhiji dwelt on many a burning question that confronted the Frontier Province and passing on to the question of communal unity said:

I have more than once heard the complaint that the establishment of Hindu-Muslim unity is being delayed owing to lack of sufficient effort in its behalf on my part, that if only I would concentrate myself on it exclusively it could be realized to-day. May I assure you that if I do not *seem* to be doing that to-day, it is not because my passion for Hindu-Muslim unity has grown less. But I have realized, as I had never done before, my own imperfections as an instrument for this high mission and the inadequacy of mere external means for the attainment of big objects. I have learnt more and more to resign myself utterly to His grace.

If you could dissect my heart, you would find that the prayer and spiritual striving for the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity goes on there unceasingly all the twenty-four hours without even a moment's interruption, whether I am awake or asleep. I want Hindu-Muslim unity if only because I know that without it there can be no *Swaraj*. Let no one imagine that because the Hindus constitute the majority community they can win *Swaraj* for India or even for themselves by organizing civil disobedience without the backing or support of the other communities. Civil disobedience of the purest type, as I have often re-

peated, can be effective even if it is confined to a few. But, then, these few must represent in their persons the united will and strength of the whole nation. Is it not the same in armed warfare? The fighting forces need the backing and co-operation of the entire civil population. Without it, they would be crippled. I must be impatient for Hindu-Muslim unity because I am impatient for *Swaraj*. And I have full faith that true and lasting heart-unity between the Hindus and Mussalmans, not a merely patched-up political compromise, will come sooner or later, sooner perhaps than later. That dream has filled my being since my earliest childhood. I have the vividest recollection of my father's days, how the Hindus and Mussalmans of Rajkot used to mix together and participate in one another's domestic functions and ceremonies like blood-brothers. I believe that those days will dawn once again over this country. The present bickerings and petty recriminations between the communities are an unnatural aberration. They cannot last for ever.

The greatest of things in this world are accomplished not through unaided human effort. They come in their own good time. God has His own way of choosing His instruments. Who knows, in spite of my incessant heart prayer, I may not be found worthy for this great work. We must all keep our loins girt and our lamps well trimmed; we do not know when or on whom His choice may fall. You may not shirk your responsibility by shoving it all on me. Pray for me that my dream may be fulfilled in my life-time. We must never give way to despair or pessimism. God's ways are more than man's arithmetic.

ON INTERVIEW WITH JINNAH

"My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be best in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. I approach politics as everything else in a religious spirit. Truth is my religion and *ahimsa* is the only way of its realization."

Gandhiji issued the following statement to the Press on his forthcoming interview with Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah:

I observe that the forthcoming interview between Shri Jinnah and myself is not only attracting very wide attention, but is also inducing high hopes among some. Then, there are friends who gravely warn me against this visit and against building any hope on the interview. It is better, therefore, for me to take the public into my confidence and tell them why and how I am waiting upon Shri Jinnah on April 28.

He has himself published my first letter to him, showing my attitude on the question of communal unity, which is as dear to me as life itself. In that letter I clearly stated that all before me was darkness and that I was praying for light. If anything, the darkness has deepened and the prayer become more intense. Add to this the fact that for causes, some of which I know and some of which I do not, for the first time in my public and private life I seem to have lost self-confidence. I seem to have detected a flaw in me which is unworthy of a votary of truth and *ahimsa*. I am going through a process of self-introspection, the results of which I cannot foresee. I find myself for the first time during the past 50 years in a slough of despond. I do not consider myself fit for negotiations or any such thing for the moment.

There is no need for any speculation as to the cause of my despondency. It is purely internal. It comes from within. It must be now clear that, if I regarded the forth-

coming interview as between two politicians, I should not entertain it in my present depression. But I approach it in no political spirit. I approach it in a prayerful and religious spirit, using the adjective in its broadest sense.

My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be best in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. I approach politics as everything else in a religious spirit. Truth is my religion and *ahimsa* is the only way of its realization. I have rejected once and for all the doctrine of the sword. The secret stabbings of innocent persons, and the speeches I read in the papers are hardly the thing leading to peace or an honourable settlement.

Again, I am not approaching the forthcoming interview in any representative capacity. I have purposely divested myself of any such. If there are to be any formal negotiations, they will be between the President of the Congress and the President of the Muslim League. I go as a life-long worker in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. It has been my passion from early youth. I count some of the noblest of Muslims as my friends. I have a devout daughter of Islam as more than a daughter to me. She lives for that unity and would cheerfully die for it. I had the son of the late Muazzin of the Juma Masjid of Bombay as a staunch inmate of the *Asbarama*. I have not met a nobler man. His morning *Azan* in the *Asbarama* rings in my ears as I write these lines during mid-night. It is for such reasons that I wait on Shri Jinnah.

I may not leave a single stone unturned to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity. God fulfils himself in strange ways. He may, in a manner least known to us both, fulfil Himself through the interview and open a way to an honourable understanding between the two communities. It is in that hope that I am looking forward to the forthcoming talk. We are friends, not strangers. It does not matter to me that we see things from different angles of vision. I ask the public not to attach any exaggerated importance to the interview. But I ask all lovers of communal peace to pray that the God of truth and love may give us both the right spirit and the right word and use us for the good of the dumb millions of India.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"I have no shadow of a doubt that our hearts will meet some day. What seems impossible to-day for us, God will make possible to-morrow. For that day I work, live and pray."

During my last journey to Simla, my attention was drawn to the bitterness with which it was alleged the Muslim League and its doings were being criticized in some Congress organs. I have not seen any such criticism for the simple reason that I do not see the papers except for a few moments daily. But if there is any ground for such complaint, it should certainly be removed. The Muslim League is a great organization. Its President was at one time an ardent Congressman. He was the rising hope of the Congress. His battles with Lord Willingdon cannot be forgotten. The Jinnah Hall of the Bombay Congress is a standing monument of the President's labours for the Congress and a mark of Congressmen's generous appreciation of his services. The League contains many members who were wholeheartedly with the Congress during the memorable *Khilafat* days. I refuse to think that these erstwhile comrades can be as bitter in their hearts towards their fellow-workers of yesterday, as their speeches and writings of to-day will show. It is, therefore, wrong of Congressmen and Congress organs if they are bitter against the League or its individual members. The Congress policy of non-violence should put an easy restraint upon the speech, writings and actions of Congressmen in their dealings with the League and its members. They must resolutely believe and hope that, sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, there is to be communal unity, not superficial but real and lasting.

Zahid, the late Big Brother's son, who met me in Simla said: "We must not quarrel. Blood is thicker

than water. We are of the same blood. You must work for unity." Other Muslim friends who met me during the journey said: "You must bring about unity. You alone can do it. Heaven help us if unity is not achieved in your life-time." I have a similar message from a great Muslim.

All this may flatter my vanity. But I know that it does humble me. I wish God had given me the power to realize the hope genuinely expressed by so many Muslim friends. I assure them that not a day passes but I think of and pray for the unity. It is neither for want of will nor effort that I have to be a helpless witness of so much bitterness and quarrelling between the two. I have not lost hope that I shall live to see real unity established between not only Hindus and Muslims, but all the communities that make India a nation. If I knew the way to achieve it to-day, I know that I have the will and the strength to take it, however difficult or thorny it may be. I know, too, that the shortest and the surest way lies through non-violence. Some Muslim friends tell me that Muslims will never subscribe to unadulterated non-violence. With them, they say, violence is as lawful and necessary as non-violence. The use of either depends upon circumstances. It does not need Quranic authority to justify the lawfulness of both. That is the well-known path the world has traversed through the ages. There is no such thing as unadulterated violence in the world. But I have heard it from many Muslim friends that the Quran teaches the use of non-violence. It regards forbearance as superior to vengeance. The very word Islam means peace, which is non-violence. Badshah Khan, a staunch Muslim who never misses his *namaz* and *Ramzan*, has accepted out and out non-violence as his creed. It would be no answer to say that he does not live up to his creed, even as I know to my shame that I do not. If there is difference in our actions, the difference is not one of kind, it is of degree. But argument about non-violence in the Holy Quran is an interpolation, not necessary for my thesis.

I hold that for the full play of non-violence only

one party need believe in it. Indeed, if both believe in it and live up to it, there is no appreciation or demonstration of it. To live at peace with one another is the most natural thing to do. But neither party gains the merit that the exercise of non-violence carries with it. Unfortunately, at the present moment, those Hindus who do not know the use of violence, though they have it in their hearts, are sorry for their incapacity and would fain learn the trick—I won't call it the art—of violence, so as to be able to match what they describe as Muslim violence. And, if peace is to be brought about by both parties being equally matched in the use of violence both offensive and defensive, I know that that peace will not come in my life-time and, if it came, I should not care to be witness of it. It will be an armed peace to be broken at any moment. Such has been the peace in Europe. Is not the present war enough to make one sick of such peace?

Muslim friends who hope much from me will, perhaps, now recognize my agony for the unattainment of peace in spite of the travail that I have gone through and am still going through. They should also see that my principal work lies through teaching at least the Hindus to learn the art of non-violence, unless I can bring the Muslims to the position the Ali Brothers and their associates took up during the *Khilafat* days. They used to say: "Even if our Hindu brethren cut us to pieces, yet will we love them. They are our kith and kin." The late Maulana Abdul Bari used to say: "Muslims of India will never forget the ungrudging and unconditional support that Hindus have given to us at this critical period of our history."¹ I am sure that both Hindus and Muslims of those days are the same to-day that they were then. But times have changed and with them have changed our manners. I have no shadow of a doubt that our hearts will meet some day. What seems impossible to-day for us, God will make possible to-morrow. For that day I work, live and pray.

¹ See *Khilafat and the Cow Question*—p. 35.

THE FICTION OF MAJORITY

"Those who raise the cry of minority in danger have nothing to fear from the so-called majority which is merely a paper-majority and which, in any event, is ineffective because it is weak in the military sense."

It is painful to find the British Press and Britishers advancing the minority claim to prevent the declaration suggested by the Congress, if I may say so, in the common interest. If the force of the Congress suggestion has not been overwhelmingly felt, the declaration will not come. There need be no dejection among Congressmen if it does not. We shall get our independence when it is deserved. But it would be well for the British Government and the allied cause, if the minority argument were not flung in the face of a credulous world. It would be honest to say that the British desire to hold India yet awhile. There will be nothing wrong in such a desire. India is a conquest. Conquests are not surrendered except when the conquered successfully rebel, or under an awakened conscience the conqueror repents of the conquest, or when the conquered territory ceases to be a profitable concern. I had hoped and still hope that the British, having become war-weary and sickened over the mad slaughter involved in the present war, would want to close it at the earliest possible moment by being above board in every respect and, therefore, in respect of India. This they can never be, so long as they hold India in bondage.

I know that many have been angry with me for claiming an exclusive right for the Congress to speak for the people of India as a whole. It is not an arrogant pretension. It is explicit in the first article of the Congress. It wants and works for independence for the whole of India. It speaks neither for majority nor minority. It seeks to represent all Indians without any distinction.

Therefore, those who oppose it should not count, if the claim for independence is admitted. Those who support the claim simply give added strength to the Congress claim.

Britain has hitherto held India by producing before the world Indians who want Britain to remain in India as ruler and arbiter between rival claimants. These will always exist. The question is whether it is right for Britain to plead these rivalries in defence of holding India under subjection, or whether she should now recognize the mistake and leave India to decide upon the method of her own government.

And who are the minorities? They are religious, political and social: thus Mussalmans (religious); Depressed Classes (social); Liberals (political); Princes (social); Brahmans (social); Non-Brahmans (social); Lingayats (social); Sikhs (social?); Christians—Protestants and Catholics (religious); Jains (social?); Zamindars (political?). I have a letter from the Secretary of the All-India Shia Conference registering their claim for separate existence. Who are the majority in this medley? Unfortunately for unhappy India, even Muslims are somewhat divided and so are the Christians. It is the policy of the British Government to recognize every group that becomes sufficiently vocal and troublesome. I have drawn no fanciful picture of the minorities. It is true to life. The Congress itself has been obliged to deal with every one of the groups I have mentioned. My list is not exhaustive. It is illustrative. It can be increased *ad libitum*.

I know that the fashion is to talk of the Hindus forming the majority community. But Hinduism is an elastic indefinable term, and Hindus are not a homogeneous whole like Muslims and Christians. And when one analyzes the majority in any provincial legislature, it will be found to consist of a combination of the so-called minorities. In other words, and in reality so far as India is concerned, there can only be political parties and no majority or minority communities. The cry of the tyranny of the majority is a fictitious cry.

I observe that Janab Jinnah Saheb has said, in reply

to Rajenbabu's letter offering to refer the League's grievances against the Congress Governments to an arbitration tribunal, that he has

"already placed the whole case before the Viceroy and the Governor-General and requested him to take up the matter without delay as he and the Governors of the Provinces have been expressly authorized under the Constitution and are entrusted with the responsibility to protect the rights and the interests of the minorities.

"The matter is now under His Excellency's consideration, and he is the proper authority to take such action and adopt such measures as would meet our requirements and would restore complete sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Mussalmans in those Provinces where the Congress Ministries are in charge of the administration."

It is unfortunate that he has rejected Rajenbabu's reasonable proposal. Is it rejection of the proffered hand of friendship? Be that as it may, nobody can have anything to say against the Viceroy investigating and adjudicating upon the charges brought against Congress Ministries. Let us hope he will soon conduct the investigation. Whether the Muslims are regarded as minorities or otherwise, their as well as any other community's rights and privileges, religious, social, cultural and political, must be regarded as a sacred trust to be jealously guarded. And the independence of India will make no difference to the protection of those rights. In fact, they will be better protected in every way, if only because in the framing of the Charter of Independence by the nation's representatives, the Muslims and other minorities, real or so-called, will have an effective voice.

Consider for one moment, what can happen if the English were to withdraw all of a sudden and there was no foreign usurper to rule. It may be said that the Punjabis, be they Muslims, Sikhs or others, will overrun India. It is highly likely that the Gurkhas will throw in their lot with the Punjabis. Assume further that non-Punjabi Muslims will make common cause with the Punjabis. Where will the Congressmen, composed chiefly of Hindus, be? If they are still truly non-violent, they will be

left unmolested by the warriors. Congressmen won't want to divide power with the warriors, but will refuse to let them exploit their unarmed countrymen. Thus, if anybody has cause to keep the British rule for protection from the stronger element, it is the Congressmen and those Hindus and others who are represented by the Congress. The question, therefore, resolves itself into not who is numerically superior, but who is stronger. Surely, there is only one answer. Those who raise the cry of minority in danger have nothing to fear from the so-called majority which is merely a paper-majority and which, in any event, is ineffective because it is weak in the military sense. Paradoxical as it may appear, it is literally true that the so-called minorities' fear has some bottom only so long as the weak majority has the backing of the British bayonets to enable it to play at democracy. But the British power will, so long as it so chooses, successfully play one against the other, calling the parties by whatever names it pleases. And this process need not be dishonest. They may honestly believe that so long as there are rival claims put up, they must remain in India in response to a call from God to hold the balance evenly between them. Only that way lies not Democracy, but Fascism, Nazism, Bolshevism and Imperialism, all facets of the doctrine of 'Might is Right.' I would fain hope that this war will change values. It can only do so, if India is recognized as independent, and if that India represents unadulterated non-violence on the political field.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"It has been the unbroken tradition of the Congress to refuse to represent any but the national interest. It has certainly never represented the Hindus as such. That function is claimed by the Hindu Mahasabha, just as that of solely representing Muslim interests is claimed by the Muslim League."

Hindu-Muslim unity means communal unity. No pact seems to be in front of us. Janab Jinnah Saheb looks to the British Power to safeguard the Muslim rights. Nothing that the Congress can do or concede will satisfy him. For he can always, and naturally from his own stand-point, ask for more than the British can give or guarantee. Therefore, there can be no limit to the Muslim League demands. So far as the Congress is concerned, it does not represent all Hindus or all of any single community except in the sense that the Congress represents all because all are believed to desire independence for the country, and the Congress is without a rival in fighting for that goal. In fact, the Congress is the only national army the country possesses. It is not the less but all the more an army for its being non-violent. It has been the unbroken tradition of the Congress to refuse to represent any but the national interest. It has certainly never represented the Hindus as such. That function is claimed by the Hindu Mahasabha, just as that of solely representing Muslim interests is claimed by the Muslim League.

The only course left open to the Congress, therefore, is to state its own communal policy for the guidance of Congressmen, no matter to which community they belong. The Congress should have no quarrel with the League for getting all it can through the British Power. An institution that is fighting that Power will never put itself in the wrong by fighting the Muslims. 6

END THE GAME OF SEE-SAW

“Once a declaration to free India from bondage, not in stages but at once, is made, an interim solution will be found to be easy. Protection of rights of minorities will then become simple. The game of see-saw will cease.”

I have read with respectful attention His Excellency the Viceroy's broadcast and his introductory remarks on the correspondence between himself and Shri Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah Saheb released by His Excellency. I welcome His Excellency's refusal to accept defeat and his determination to solve what seems to have become insoluble. I share to the fullest extent His Excellency's anxiety to reach a solution. Without, therefore, waiting for the Congress reaction to these two declarations and purely for the sake of assisting the common cause, I would like to suggest that no solution is possible unless an acceptable declaration of war aims about India is forthcoming. The pronouncements hitherto made, whether here or in Great Britain, are after the old style, suspected and discredited by freedom-loving India. If Imperialism is dead, there must be a clear break with the past. Language suited to the new era has to be used. If the time has not yet come for the acceptance of this fundamental truth, I would urge that further effort at reaching a solution should be suspended. In this connection, I would remind British statesmen that what is wanted is a declaration of Britain's intention regarding her Indian policy, irrespective of India's wishes. A slave-holder, who has decided to abolish slavery, does not consult his slaves whether they desire freedom or not.

Once a declaration to free India from bondage, not in stages but at once, is made, an interim solution will be found to be easy. Protection of rights of minorities will then become simple. The game of see-saw will cease.

The minorities are entitled to protection, not in stages but to the fullest extent and in one single step. No charter of freedom will be worth looking at which does not ensure the same measure of freedom for the minorities as for the majority. The minorities will be full-fledged partners in the framing of the constitution. How that can be attained will depend upon the wisdom of the representatives charged with the sacred duty of preparing the constitution. Britain has hitherto held power—this is inevitable in any system of imperialism—by playing the minorities against the so-called majority, and has thus made an agreed solution among the component parts well-nigh impossible. The burden of finding a formula for the protection of minorities should be thrown on the parties themselves. So long as Britain considers it her mission to bear this burden, so long will she continue to feel the necessity of holding India as dependency. And patriots impatient for deliverance will fight, non-violently if I can guide them, and violently if I fail and perish in the attempt. God's curse of war, I had hoped and still hope, would be turned into a blessing by Britain, realizing that the one thing needful for her to justify and hasten the end of this war was to free a great and ancient country like India from her yoke.

Believing as I do in the Viceroy's sincerity, I would urge fellow-workers not to lose patience. There can be no civil resistance so long as, first, the Viceroy is exploring the possibilities of a settlement; secondly, the Muslim League blocks the way; and, thirdly, there is indiscipline and disunity in Congress ranks.

The second condition should not offend Muslim friends. So long as there is no workable arrangement with the Muslim League, civil resistance must involve resistance against the League. No Congressman can be party to it. I observe that my note in *Harijan* has shocked Jinnah Saheb. I am sorry for it. But at this stage I would not defend myself. I do not want to mar in any way the negotiations between him and Pandit Nehru, which I hope will be resumed soon and pray will lead to communal peace.

UNNECESSARY ALARM

"I refuse to believe that Muslims can possibly hold up for any length of time the progress of the country which is as much theirs as others'. I see no harm in making the admission that, if the crores of Muslims do not desire freedom, they can at least for a time prevent it for the others, unless the latter are prepared to fight the former."

Writing on my statement on the Viceregal preface to the correspondence between the Viceroy and Shri Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah Sahab, an esteemed co-worker says :

"I have read with some surprise and distress your statement in to-day's papers which makes any further action by us dependent on a settlement with the Muslim League and on the Viceroy continuing his efforts at parleying. I should imagine that this attitude makes any settlement either with the British Government or the Muslim League most difficult."

This sentiment is probably shared by many Congressmen. I must, therefore, try to dispel the fear. In my opinion, suspension of civil disobedience is inherent in both the cases. We may not precipitate civil disobedience whilst the Viceroy is making an effort to placate parties. The suspension cannot be indefinite or even prolonged. We may not put ourselves in the wrong. Suspension for the sake of the Viceroy is an aid to settlement.

As to the Muslim League, it seems to me to be self-evident that, whilst we are quarrelling among ourselves we cannot resort to civil disobedience on any large scale. This is obvious. Moreover, we cannot come to a true settlement by hiding the truth from ourselves or others. I refuse to believe that Muslims can possibly hold up for any length of time the progress of the country which is as much theirs as others'. I see no harm in making the admission that, if the crores of Muslims do not desire

freedom, they can at least for a time prevent it for the others, unless the latter are prepared to fight the former. I have eliminated that possibility so far as the Congress is concerned. The admission of the obvious is a gesture of good-will towards the Muslim League. It throws also the onus on the League of blocking the country's progress. The admission should improve the prospect of a settlement.

It is worthwhile noticing the use of the word 'action' in the remarks quoted by me. What I have contemplated is merely suspension of civil disobedience in the event of the two contingencies mentioned by me, not of every variety of action. The Congress is not a static organization. It is ever moving. Whilst I cannot anticipate events, I have no doubt that the Congress will find means other than civil disobedience, within its self-imposed limits, of dealing with the crisis. I must repeat that we shall harm the cause by being impatient. I daily receive letters from men and women telling me that they are ready for the word and they will give a good account of themselves, and that I need have no fear of an outbreak of violence. To all these I would say that, if they are sincere in their professions, patient waiting will add to their strength and ensure success.

THE ONLY WAY

"I can conceive the possibility of a people fitting themselves for right government through a series of wrong experiments, but I cannot conceive a people governing themselves rightly through a government imposed from without, even as the fabled jackdaw could not walk like a peacock with feathers borrowed from his elegant companion."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has compelled me to study, among other things, the implications of a Constituent Assembly. When he first introduced it in the Congress resolutions, I reconciled myself to it because of my belief in his superior knowledge of the technicalities of democracy. But I was not free from scepticism. Hard facts have, however, made me a convert and, for that reason perhaps, more enthusiastic than Jawaharlal himself. For I seem to see in it a remedy, which Jawaharlal may not, for our communal and other distempers, besides being a vehicle for mass political and other education.

The more criticism I see of the scheme, the more enamoured I become of it. It will be the surest index to the popular feeling. It will bring out the best and the worst in us. Illiteracy does not worry me. I would plump for unadulterated adult franchise for both men and women, *i.e.*, I would put them all on the register of voters. It is open to them not to exercise it if they do not wish to. I would give separate vote to the Muslims; but, without giving separate vote, I would, though reluctantly, give reservation, if required, to every real minority according to its numerical strength.

Thus, the Constituent Assembly provides the easiest method of arriving at a just solution of the communal problem. To-day we are unable to say with mathematical precision who represents whom. Though the Congress is admittedly the oldest representative organization on the widest scale, it is open to political and semi-

political organizations to question, as they do question, its overwhelmingly representative character. The Muslim League is undoubtedly the largest organization representing Muslims, but several Muslim bodies—by no means all insignificant—deny its claim to represent them. But the Constituent Assembly will represent all communities in their exact proportion. Except it, there is no other way of doing full justice to rival claims. Without it, there can be no finality to communal and other claims.

Again, the Constituent Assembly alone can produce a constitution indigenous to the country and truly and fully representing the will of the people. Undoubtedly such a constitution will not be ideal, but it will be real, however imperfect it may be in the estimation of the theorists or legal luminaries. Self-government to be self-government has merely to reflect the will of the people who are to govern themselves. If they are not prepared for it, they will make a hash of it. I can conceive the possibility of a people fitting themselves for right government through a series of wrong experiments, but I cannot conceive a people governing themselves rightly through a government imposed from without, even as the fabled jackdaw could not walk like a peacock with feathers borrowed from his elegant companion. A diseased person has a prospect of getting well by personal effort. He cannot borrow health from others.

The risks of the experiment are admitted. There is likely to be impersonation. Unscrupulous persons will mislead the illiterate masses into voting for wrong men and women. These risks have to be run, if we are to evolve something true and big. The Constituent Assembly, if it comes into being—as I hope it will—as a result of an honourable settlement between us and the British people, the combined wit of the best men of the two nations will produce an Assembly that will reflect fairly truly the best mind of India. Therefore, the success of the experiment at the present stage of India's history depends upon the intention of the British statesmen to part with power, without engaging India in a deadly unorganized rebellion. For, I know that, India has be-

come impatient. I am painfully conscious of the fact that India is not yet ready for non-violent civil disobedience on a mass scale. If, therefore, I cannot persuade the Congress to await the time when non-violent action is possible, I have no desire to live to see a dog-fight between the two communities. I know for certain that, if I cannot discover a method of non-violent action or inaction to the satisfaction of the Congress and there is no communal adjustment, nothing on earth can prevent an outbreak of violence resulting for the time being in anarchy and red ruin. I hold that it is the duty of all communities and Englishmen to prevent such a catastrophe.

The only way out is a Constituent Assembly. I have given my own opinion on it, but I am not tied down to the details. When I was nearly through with this article, I got the following wire from Syed Abdulla Brelvi :

“Considerable misapprehensions among minorities (about) Constituent Assembly. Strongly urge clarification details, franchise, composition, methods arriving decision.”

I think I have said sufficient in the foregoing to answer Syed Sahab's question. By minorities, he has Muslims principally in mind as represented by the Muslim League. If once the proposition, that all communities desire a charter of independence framed by a Constituent Assembly, and that they will not be satisfied with anything else, is accepted, the settling of details surely becomes easy. Any other method must lead to an imposed constitution mostly undemocratic. It would mean an indefinite prolongation of imperialistic rule, sustained by the help of those who will not accept the fully democratic method of a Constituent Assembly.

The principal hindrance is undoubtedly the British Government. If they can summon a Round Table Conference, as they propose to do after the War, they can surely summon Constituent Assembly, subject to safeguards, to the satisfaction of minorities. The expression ‘satisfaction of minorities’ may be regarded as

vague. It can be defined beforehand by agreement. The question thus resolves itself into whether the British Government desire to part with power and open a new chapter in their own history. I have already shown that the question of the Princes is a red herring across the path. European interests are absolutely safe so long as they are not in conflict with 'the interests of India.' I think this expression finds place in the Irwin-Gandhi Pact.

Look at the question from any stand-point you like, it will be found that the way to democratic *Swaraj* lies only through a properly constituted Assembly, call it by whatever name you like. All resources must, therefore, be exhausted to reach the Constituent Assembly before direct action is thought of. A stage may be reached when direct action may become the necessary prelude to the Constituent Assembly. That stage is not yet.

COMMUNAL FELLOWSHIP

“Pacts are meant for big people. They do not affect men in the street—the ground-down millions. In cultivating fellowship among these, written pacts are not needed.”

In the course of his article entitled The Pledge, Gandhiji expressed himself on the Hindu-Muslim question as follows :

What do I mean by communal fellowship? How is it to be obtained when the Jinnah-Nehru talks have failed? They may or may not have failed. Pacts are meant for big people. They do not affect men in the street, the ground-down millions. In cultivating fellowship among these, written pacts are not needed. Do Congressmen cultivate good-will towards all without political motive? This fellow-feeling should be natural, not born out of fear or expedience, even as fellowship between blood-brothers, not being born out of any ulterior motive, is natural and lasting. Nor is it to be applied only as between Hindus and Muslims. It has to be universal. It must be extended to the least among us. It is to be extended to Englishmen. It is to be extended to political opponents. Removal of untouchability again has deep significance. The very idea of high and low among Hindus should be rooted out. Caste solidarity should give place to national solidarity. In Congress ranks these distinctions should be relics of the past.

A WELCOME MOVE

“Nothing can be better than that we should have in the country mainly two parties—Congress and non-Congress or anti-Congress, if the latter expression is preferred.”

On the Deliverance Thanksgiving Day, declared by Jinnah Saheb, I had the following wire from Gulbarga Muslims :

“Deliverance Day greetings, Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah Zindabad.”

I took it as a message sent to ruffle my feelings. The senders little knew that the wire could not serve its purpose. When I received it, I silently joined the senders in the wish “Long Live Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah.” The Quaid-e-Azam is an old comrade. What does it matter that to-day we do not see eye to eye in some matters? That can make no difference in my good-will towards him.

But the Quaid-e-Azam has given me special reason for congratulating him. I had the pleasure of wiring him congratulations on his excellent Id-day broadcast. And now he commands further congratulations on forming pacts with parties who are opposed to the Congress policies and politics. He is thus lifting the Muslim League out of the communal rut and giving it a national character. I regard his step as perfectly legitimate. I observe that the Justice Party and Dr. Ambedkar's party have already joined Jinnah Saheb. The papers report, too, that Shri Savarkar, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, is to see him presently. Jinnah Saheb himself has informed the public that many non-Congress Hindus have expressed their sympathy with him. I regard this development as thoroughly healthy. Nothing can be better than that we should have in the country mainly two parties—Congress and non-Congress or anti-Congress, if the latter expression is preferred. Jinnah Saheb

is giving the word 'minority' a new and good content. The Congress majority is made up of a combination of Caste Hindus, non-Caste Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Jews. Therefore, it is a majority drawn from all classes, representing a particular body of opinion; and the proposed combination becomes a minority representing another body of opinion. This may any day convert itself into a majority by commending itself to the electorate. Such an alignment of parties is a consummation devoutly to be wished. If the Quaid-e-Azam can bring about the combination, not only I but the whole of India will shout with one acclamation: "Long Live Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah." For, he will have brought about permanent and living unity for which I am sure the whole nation is thirsting.

UNITY v. JUSTICE—I

“My belief is unshaken that without communal unity *Swaraj* cannot be attained through non-violence. But unity cannot be reached without justice between communities. Muslim or any other friendship cannot be bought with bribery. Bribery would itself mean cowardice and, therefore, violence.”

A visitor came the other day and said : “You have done an irreparable injury to India by saying that there is no *Swaraj* without communal unity. You should say instead that there is no *Swaraj* without justice between and to the different communities”. I reasoned with my visitor, but he would not be consoled. He said : “You have offered to sell your soul to win the favour of your Muslim friends.” I protested and said : “Surely you know, the world knows, that I would not sell my soul to buy India’s freedom. And if I want Muslim friendship, it is not for personal gratification but for India’s sake. You are unjust to me.” My visitor retorted with some passion : “I know your love for the country. If I had not known it, I would not have come to you specially. But your love has blinded you to the mistake you have made and are making. You do not know what Hindus say and do. For fear of offending Muslims, they suffer because they believe in you. I do beseech you to replace ‘unity’ with ‘justice’.” It was no use my arguing with my friend. And I had no time. I promised to deal with the question in these columns. The promise soothed him. I do not know that my answer will.

My belief is unshaken that without communal unity *Swaraj* cannot be attained through non-violence. But unity cannot be reached without justice between communities. Muslim or any other friendship cannot be bought with bribery. Bribery would itself mean cow-

ardice and, therefore, violence. But if I give more than his due to my brother, I do not bribe him nor do I do any injustice. I can disarm suspicion only by being generous. Justice without generosity may easily become Shylock's justice. I must, however, take care that the generosity is not done at the expense of the very cause for which it is sought to be done.

I cannot, therefore, drop the idea of unity or the effort for it. But what is wanted is not so much justice as right action. Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah's reply to me, as published in the Press, however, dashes to the ground all hope of unity if he represents the Muslim mind. His repudiation of the natural meaning I put upon his action in making common cause with the different political groups has created a unique situation. His picture of India as a continent containing nations counted according to their religions, if it is realized, would undo the effort the Congress has been making for over half a century. But I hope that Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah's opinion is a temporary phase in the history of the Muslim League. Muslims of the different provinces can never cut themselves away from their Hindu or Christian brethren. Both Muslims and Christians are converts from Hinduism or are descendants of converts. They do not cease to belong to their provinces because of change of faith. Englishmen who become converts to Islam do not change their nationality. I hope Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah does not represent the considered opinion even of his colleagues.

UNITY v. JUSTICE—II

“Even as justice to be justice has to be generous, generosity in order to justify itself has got to be strictly just. Therefore, it should not be at the expense of any single interest.”

Q. In your article *Unity v. Justice* you say that, if you give more than his due to your brother, you neither bribe him nor do you do an injustice. You say: “I can disarm suspicion only by being generous. Justice without generosity is done at the expense of the very cause for which it is sought to be done.” I submit that justice and generosity cannot go hand in hand. As Dryden has rightly observed: “Justice is blind, it knows nobody.” Besides, you can be generous to the weak, meek and the humble, not to one who in the arrogance of his strength seeks to coerce you into submission. To give more than his due to such a person is not generosity but cowardly surrender. Though Hindus are numerically stronger, their majority, as you yourself have pointed out, is only fictitious¹ and actually they are the weaker party. Besides, if generosity is to be shown to the Muslims, the only organization that is competent to offer it is the Hindu Mahasabha. What right has a third party to be generous to one of the two parties to a dispute at the other party's expense?

A. In my article referred to by you, I have dealt with general principles, not with particular minorities. Even as justice to be justice has to be generous, generosity in order to justify itself has got to be strictly just. Therefore, it should not be at the expense of any single interest. Hence, there cannot be any question of sacrificing some minority or minorities for the benefit of any minority. You are right again in contending that generosity has to be shown to the weak and the humble, and not to the bully. Nevertheless I would say, on behalf of the bully, that even he is entitled to justice, for immediately you brush aside the bully and be unjust to him you justify his bullying. Thus, the only safe—not to put it higher—

¹ See *Fiction of Majority*, p. 390.

rule of conduct is to do generous justice, irrespective of the character of the minority. I am quite sure that where there is strictest justice, the question of majority and minority would not arise. The bully is a portent and is an answer to some existing circumstance, as, for instance, cowardice. It is often forgotten that cowardice can be unjust. The fact is that cowards have no sense of justice. They yield only to threat or actual use of force. I do not know that there is any question of choice between a coward and a bully. The one is as bad as the other, with this difference that the bully always follows the coward in point of time.

In a previous issue, I have admitted that the proper organization to enter into settlements is the Hindu Mahasabha so far as Hindus are concerned, or any such organization. The Congress endeavours to represent all communities. It is not by design but by the accident of Hindus being politically more conscious than the others, that the Congress contains a majority of Hindus. As history proves, the Congress is a joint creation of Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Hindus, led by Englishmen, be it said to the credit of the latter. And the Congress, in spite of all that may be said to the contrary, retains that character. At the present moment, a Muslim divine is the unquestioned leader of the Congress and for the second time becomes its president.¹ The constant endeavour of Congressmen has been to have as many members as possible drawn from the various communities, and, therefore, the Congress has entered into pacts for the purpose of securing national solidarity. It cannot, therefore, divest itself of that function, and, therefore, although I have made the admission that the Hindu Mahasabha or a similar Hindu organization can properly have communal settlements, the Congress cannot and must not plead incapacity for entering into political pacts so long as it commands general confidence.

¹ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

USE OF FORCE AGAINST MUSLIMS

“The Congress will not coerce Muslims or any minority. That would not be a non-violent approach. The greatest coercion is British coercion. And the Congress is impatient to get out of that coercion.”

Q. You talk of complete independence from British and at the same time of settling the question of minorities through a Constituent Assembly. This means that, if Muslims do not listen to you, you would want to use British forces to compel them to submit to your will.

A. This question simply ignores my own position and, so far as I know, the Congress position. The Congress cannot want independence and the use of British forces at the same time. But that is not all. The Congress will not coerce Muslims or any minority. That would not be a non-violent approach. The greatest coercion is British coercion. And the Congress is impatient to get out of that coercion. My hope in desiring a Constituent Assembly is that whether the Muslims are represented by the Muslim League mentality or any other, the representatives, when they are face to face with the reality, will not think of cutting up India according to religions, but will regard India as an indivisible whole and discover a national, *i.e.*, Indian, solution of even specially Muslim questions. But if the hope is frustrated, the Congress cannot forcibly resist the express will of the Muslims of India. Needless to say, the Congress can never seek the assistance of British forces to resist the vivisection. It is the Muslims who will impose their will by force, singly or with British assistance, on an unresisting India. If I can carry the Congress with me, I would not put the Muslims to the trouble of using force. I would be ruled by them, for it would still be Indian rule. In other words, the Congress will have only a non-violent approach to

every question and difficulty arising. But just as it is possible that Muslim representatives to the Constituent Assembly may wear another hue than that of the Muslim League, it is also possible that the others may be non-Congressmen. In that event, the British will be where they are, only they will be wooed by both the parties alternately and will remain the architects of India's destiny. For then, with the Congress swept away, non-violence will be blown to the winds and naturally the infinitely superior violence of the British, aided by the willing co-operation of the wooing party, will easily rule India. For, the only force matched against British force is that of non-violence, incomplete though it is, of the Congress.

MY ANSWER TO QUAID-E-AZAM

“The Constituent Assembly, as conceived by me, is not intended to coerce anybody. Its sole sanction will be an agreed solution of communal questions. If there is no agreement, the Constituent Assembly will be automatically dissolved.”

Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah is reported to have said :

“Mr. Gandhi has been saying for the last 20 years that there cannot be any *Swaraj* without Hindu-Muslim unity. Mr. Gandhi is fighting for a Constituent Assembly. May I point out to Mr. Gandhi and the Congress that they are fighting for a Constituent Assembly which we cannot accept? Therefore, the idea of a Constituent Assembly is impracticable and unacceptable. Mr. Gandhi wants a Constituent Assembly for purposes of ascertaining the views of Muslims, and if they do not agree, he would then give up all hope and then will agree with us. If there exists the will to come to a settlement with the Muslim League, then why does not Mr. Gandhi, as I have said more than once, honestly agree that the Congress is a Hindu organization and that it does not represent anything but the solid body of Hindus? Why should Mr. Gandhi not be proud to say : ‘I am a Hindu and the Congress is a Hindu body’? I am not ashamed of saying that I am a Muslim and that the Muslim League is the representative of Muslims. Why all this camouflage, why this threat of civil disobedience, and why this fight for a Constituent Assembly? Why should not Mr. Gandhi come as a Hindu leader and let me meet him proudly representing the Mussalmans?”

My position is and has been clear. I am proud of being a Hindu, but I have never gone to anybody as a Hindu to secure Hindu-Muslim unity. My Hinduism demands no pacts. My support of *Khilafat* was unconditional. I am no politician in the accepted sense. But whatever talks I had with Quaid-e-Azam or any other have been on behalf of the Congress which is not a Hindu organization. Can a Hindu organization have a Muslim divine as President and can its Working Committee have 4 Muslim members out of 15? I still maintain that there

is no *Swaraj* without Hindu-Muslim unity.¹ I can never be party to the coercion of Muslims or any other minority. The Constituent Assembly, as conceived by me, is not intended to coerce anybody. Its sole sanction will be an agreed solution of communal questions. If there is no agreement, the Constituent Assembly will be automatically dissolved. The Constituent Assembly or any body of elected representatives can be questioned. But who can question the sole representative capacity of the elected delegates to the Constituent Assembly? I cannot understand the Muslim opposition to the proposed Constituent Assembly. Are the opponents afraid that the Muslim League will not be elected by Muslim voters? Do they not realize that any Muslim demand made by the Muslim delegates will be irresistible? If the vast majority of Indian Muslims feel that they are not one nation with their Hindu and other brethren, who will be able to resist them? But, surely, it is permissible to dispute

¹ Referring to communal unity in his speech before the Subjects Committee at Ramgarh Congress, Gandhiji said :

"We are all equal before our Maker—Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians, worshippers of one God. Why, then, do we fight among ourselves ?

"We are all brothers—even the Quaid-e-Azam is my brother. I have meant all that I have said about him, never has a frivolous word escaped my lips, and I say that I want to win him over. A speaker said that I would not fight until I had won him over, and he was right. There was a time when there was not a Muslim whose confidence I did not enjoy. To-day I have forfeited that confidence and most of the Urdu press pours abuse on me. But I am not sorry for it. It only confirms me in my belief that there is no *Swaraj* without a settlement with the Mussalmans.

"You will perhaps ask, in that case, why am I talking of a fight. I do so, in order to have a Constituent Assembly which means agreement and settlement. But if the Mussalmans will have nothing to do with it, I will understand that there is no settlement. I am also a reader of Quran like them, and I will tell them that the Quran makes no distinction between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. But if they feel that they should have the Heaven without the Hindus, I will not grudge it to them."

the authority of the 50,000 Muslims who listened to Quaid-e-Azam to represent the feelings of eight crores of Indian Muslims.

MY POSITION

“As a man of non-violence, I cannot forcibly resent the proposed partition if the Muslims of India really insist upon it. But I can never be a willing party to the vivisection. I would employ every non-violent means to prevent it.”

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan has, in his criticism of my reply to Quaid-e-Azam, put some questions which I gladly answer. I must adhere to my statement that I have never spoken to anybody on the communal question as a Hindu. I have no authority. Whenever I have spoken to anybody I have spoken as a Congressman, but often only as an individual. No Congressman, not even the President, can always speak as a representative. Big things have always been transacted on this planet by persons belonging to different organizations coming together and talking informally in their non-representative capacity. I fear that even the answer I am about to give must be taken as representing nobody but myself. In the present instance, I have reason to say that probably I do not represent any single member of the Working Committee. I am answering as a peace-maker, as a friend (and may I say brother) of the Mussalmans.

As a man of non-violence, I cannot forcibly resent the proposed partition if the Muslims of India really insist upon it. But I can never be a willing party to the vivisection. I would employ every non-violent means to prevent it. For it means the undoing of centuries of work done by numberless Hindus and Muslims to live together as one nation. Partition means a patent untruth. My whole soul rebels against the idea that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrines. To assent to such a doctrine is for me denial of God. For I believe with my whole soul that the God of the Quran is, also the God of the Gita, and that we are

all, no matter by what name designated, children of the same God. I must rebel against the idea that millions of Indians, who were Hindus the other day, changed their nationality on adopting Islam as their religion.

But that is my belief. I cannot thrust it down the throats of the Muslims who think that they are a different nation. I refuse, however, to believe that the eight crores of Muslims will say that they have nothing in common with their Hindu and other brethren. Their mind can only be known by a referendum duly made to them on that clear issue. The contemplated Constituent Assembly can easily decide the question. Naturally, on an issue such as this there can be no arbitration. It is purely and simply a matter of self-determination. I know of no other conclusive method of ascertaining the mind of the eight crores of Muslims.

But the contemplated Constituent Assembly will have the framing of a constitution as its main function. It cannot do this until the communal question is settled.

I still believe that there can be no *Swaraj* by non-violent means without communal unity. And eight crores of Muslims can certainly bar the way to peaceful freedom.

If, then, I still talk of civil disobedience, it is because I believe that the Muslim masses want freedom as much as the rest of the population of this country. And assuming that they do not, civil disobedience will be a powerful means of educating public opinion—whether Muslim, Hindu or any other. It will also be an education of world opinion. But I will not embark upon it unless I am, as far as is humanly possible, sure that non-violence will be observed both in spirit and in the letter. I hope the Nawabzada has no difficulty in believing that whatever is gained by civil disobedience will be gained for all. When India gets the power to frame her own constitution, the Muslims will surely have a decisive voice in shaping their own future. It will not be, cannot be, decided by the vote of the majority.

Lastly, I suggest to the Nawabzada that he wrote in haste the lines about the President of the Congress.

For they are contrary to the history of our own times. And he was equally in haste in suggesting that "the sole objective of the Congress under Mr. Gandhi's fostering care has been the revival of Hinduism and the imposition of Hindu culture on all and sundry." My own objective is not the issue in the terrible indictment. The objective of the Congress is wholly political. Nothing is to be gained by making statements that are incapable of proof. So far as my own objective is concerned, my life is an open book. I claim to represent all the cultures, for my religion, whatever it may be called, demands the fulfilment of all cultures. I am at home wherever I go, for I regard all religions with the same respect as my own.

A BAFFLING SITUATION

"I do not believe that Muslims, when it comes to a matter of actual decision, will ever want vivisection. Their good sense will prevent them. Their self-interest will deter them. Their religion will forbid the obvious suicide which the partition would mean."

A question has been put to me:

"Do you intend to start general civil disobedience although Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah has declared war against Hindus and has got the Muslim League to pass a resolution favouring vivisection of India into two? If you do, what becomes of your formula that there is no *Swaraj* without communal unity?"

I admit that the step taken by the Muslim League at Lahore creates a baffling situation. But I do not regard it so baffling as to make civil disobedience an impossibility. Supposing that the Congress is reduced to a hopeless minority, it will still be open to it, indeed it may be its duty, to resort to civil disobedience. The struggle will not be against the majority, it will be against the foreign ruler. If the struggle succeeds, the fruits thereof will be reaped as well by the Congress as by the opposing majority. Let me, however, say in parenthesis that, until the conditions I have mentioned for starting civil disobedience are fulfilled, civil disobedience cannot be started in any case. In the present instance, there is nothing to prevent the imperial rulers from declaring their will in unequivocal terms that henceforth India will govern herself according to her own will, not that of the rulers as has happened hitherto. Neither the Muslim League nor any other party can oppose such a declaration. "For, the Muslims will be entitled to dictate their own terms. Unless the rest of India wishes to engage in internal fratricide, the others will have to submit to Muslim dictation if the Muslims will resort to it. I know no non-violent method

of compelling the obedience of eight crores of Muslims to the will of the rest of India, however powerful a majority the rest may represent. The Muslims must have the same right of self-determination that the rest of India has. We are at present a joint family. Any member may claim a division.

Thus, so far as I am concerned, my proposition that there is no *Swaraj* without communal unity holds as good to-day as when I first enunciated it in 1919.

But civil disobedience stands on a different footing. It is open even to one single person to offer it, if he feels the call. It will not be offered for the Congress alone or for any particular group. Whatever benefit accrues from it will belong to the whole of India. The injury, if there is any, will belong only to the civil disobedience party.

But I do not believe that Muslims, when it comes to a matter of actual decision, will ever want vivisection. Their good sense will prevent them. Their self-interest will deter them. Their religion will forbid the obvious suicide which the partition would mean. The "two nations" theory is an untruth. The vast majority of Muslims of India are converts to Islam or are descendants of converts. They did not become a separate nation as soon as they became converts. A Bengali Muslim speaks the same tongue that a Bengali Hindu does, eats the same food, has the same amusements as his Hindu neighbour. They dress alike. I have often found it difficult to distinguish by outward sign between a Bengali Hindu and a Bengali Muslim. The same phenomenon is observable, more or less, in the South among the poor who constitute the masses of India. When I first met the late Sir Ali Imam I did not know that he was not a Hindu. His speech, his dress, his manners, his food were the same as of the majority of the Hindus in whose midst I found him. His name alone betrayed him. Not even that with Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah. For his name could be that of any Hindu. When I first met him, I did not know that he was a Muslim. I came to know his religion when I had his full name given to me. His nationality was written in his face and manner. The reader will be surprised to know that for

days, if not months, I used to think of the late Vithalbhay Patel as a Muslim, as he used to sport a beard and a Turkish cap. The Hindu law of inheritance governs many Muslim groups. Sir Mahomed Iqbal used to speak with pride of his Brahmanical descent. Iqbal and Kitchlew are names common to Hindus and Muslims. Hindus and Muslims of India are not two nations. Those whom God has made one, man will never be able to divide.

And is Islam such an exclusive religion as Quaid-e-Azam would have it? Is there nothing in common between Islam and Hinduism or any other religion? Or, is Islam merely an enemy of Hinduism? Were the Ali Brothers and their associates wrong when they hugged Hindus as blood-brothers and saw so much in common between the two? I am not now thinking of individual Hindus who may have disillusioned the Muslim friends. Quaid-e-Azam has, however, raised a fundamental issue. This is his thesis:

"It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. This misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time.

"The Hindus and Muslims have two different religious philosophies, social customs, literatures. They neither inter-marry, nor inter-dine together, and, indeed, they belong to different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and they have different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and, likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state."

He does not say some Hindus are bad; he says Hindus as such have nothing in common with Muslims.

I make bold to say that he and those who think like him are rendering no service to Islam; they are misinterpreting the message inherent in the very word Islam. I say this because I feel deeply hurt over what is now going on in the name of the Muslim League. I should be failing in my duty, if I did not warn the Muslims of India against the untruth that is being propagated amongst them. This warning is a duty because I have faithfully served them in their hour of need and because Hindu-Muslim unity has been and is my life's mission.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

“Religions are not for separating men from one another, they are meant to bind them. It is a misfortune that to-day they are so distorted that they have become a potent cause of strife and mutual slaughter.”

Thus writes a Khan Bahadur from Delhi:

“In your article in *Harijan* of April 6, you observe as follows :

‘I should be failing in my duty if I did not warn the Mussalmans against the untruth that is being propagated amongst them. This warning is a duty because I have faithfully served them in their hour of need and because Hindu-Muslim unity has been and is my life’s mission.’

“I will request you to consider the Hindu-Muslim problem from our point of view. The stumbling block to any negotiations for a settlement of the communal question has been the refusal of the Congress to recognize the All-India Muslim League as the authoritative and sole representative body of the Indian Mussalmans. The Congress claims that it speaks for whole India and that it has on its rolls a considerable number of Mussalmans. The very fact that the Congress has made several attempts to come to terms with Mr. Jinnah shows that it is not fully confident of its representative character, as far as the Mussalmans are concerned. But do you not honestly feel that the Congress Mussalmans are the real stumbling block in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity, and that it is for their sake that the Congress is not making a serious effort to solve the problem? Believe me, they are a lazy lot who are enjoying their present position because they are in the Congress.

“You know what the Muslim masses did to your President in Calcutta where for years he had been leading Id prayer. You also know that they have no courage to address a Muslim meeting to convert the Mussalmans to their point of view. You blame the British for creating Princes, Moderates and Khan Bahadurs like me. You blame the British for trying to create another Ulster in India. Has not the Congress created equivalent Moderates and Khan Bahadurs in Azads, Asaf Alis and Kidwais? Is not the action of the Congress tantamount to creation of a Muslim Ulster?

"You may cite the case of Mr. Asaf Ali succeeding in the municipal elections of Delhi. I may inform you that but for a division in the Provincial League and bad handling of the situation, Mr. Asaf Ali would have never won the election. I may inform you that even as it is, when Delhi Congress wanted to contest the municipal elections as a party, Mr. Asaf Ali, who is now a member of the Congress Working Committee, had declined to take a Congress ticket. Therefore, Mr. Asaf Ali's election was not a test case; and if you pardon my saying so, even now let Mr. Asaf Ali re-seek election on a Congress ticket, and I am confident that any League candidate would defeat him. You will thus realize that your being baffled by the Lahore resolution of the League is not justified when Mussalmans have ceased to trust in your life's mission regarding Hindu-Muslim unity. On the other hand, they are convinced that the sole aim of the Congress, for the last ten years at least, has been to divide and rule the Mussalmans. I will beg of you to reconsider your attitude towards the League. Please don't trust the Congressite Mussalmans, for they are not only the 'Mir Jafars' amongst us, but the enemies of Hindu-Muslim accord and India's freedom."

Just now I am inundated with letters of protest from Muslim friends. Most writers do not argue. They give themselves satisfaction by abusing. Pyarelal, who opens and deals with the daily post, gives me only those letters which he thinks I should see. Of these, I take notice of those I think I must. In some cases, I answer them privately. Therefore, correspondents who never receive acknowledgment either through *Harjan* or the post should know the reason.

There are some Muslim letters of sympathy, too. One of them says that in his house he has to listen to wildest criticism of me. No adjective is too bad to use. Much criticism he knows to be false. What is he to do, he asks. Is he to leave the house, or is he to engage in endless disputation and convert his house into a bear garden? I have advised my correspondent neither to leave the house nor to engage in a discussion. If he can, he may put in a mild word when he knows that manifest falsehood is being uttered and believed.

The correspondence in my possession and the Urdu press cuttings from journals owned by Muslims go to show that I am believed to be the arch-enemy of Islam and Indian

Muslims. If I was at one time acclaimed as their greatest friend and suffered the praise, I must suffer, too, to be described as an enemy. Truth is known only to God. I am confident that in nothing that I am doing, saying or thinking, I am their enemy. They are blood-brothers and will remain so, though they may disown me ever so much.

Now for the Khan Bahadur's letter.

I have never understood the reason behind the demand for the recognition by the Congress of the All-India Muslim League as the sole and authoritative Muslim body. Why should such an admission be demanded or expected? How is it compatible with a genuine desire for a settlement?

The Congress attempts to represent all. But it has never demanded recognition as such from anybody. The all-India status has to be deserved. But whether it be deserved or not, admission thereof is a superfluity. The Congress has never claimed that it represents the whole of Indian Muslims. It has not claimed to represent any single community wholly. But it does claim to represent every single national interest irrespective of class, caste colour or creed. Even that need not be admitted by those who deal with it. It should be sufficient consolation to each party that it is considered by the other important enough to seek friendship with.

The Congress has always frankly admitted that it has not on its register as many Muslims as it would like. But it has been proud to have had the support of many eminent Muslims. Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan was the tallest among them. Quaid-e-Azam himself was a great Congressman. It was only after Non-co-operation that he, like many other Congressmen belonging to several communities, left it. Their defection was purely political. They disliked direct action.

It is wrong to swear at the nationalist Muslims simply because they are attached to the Congress. If they become members of the League, they will become worthy Muslims! My correspondent simply does not know how much Congress Muslims are trying to bring about unity. When

unity is re-established, as it must be, I have no doubt that nationalist Muslims will get their due both from Hindus and Muslims.

It is torture of truth to suggest that they are so many Mir Jafars. They are betraying neither Islam nor India. They are as true Muslims according to their lights as members of the League claim to be. It is equal torture of truth to suggest that the Congress is following the British method of divide and rule. The Congress is a political party with one single aim. It would be a bad day for India if the Congress could be proved to have mean motives. Is it mean to woo Muslim opinion by the fairest means imaginable? Rightly or wrongly, the Congress does not believe in water-tight compartments on a communal basis. If religion is allowed to be, as it is, a personal concern and a matter between God and man, there are many dominating common factors between the two which will compel common life and common action. Religions are not for separating men from one another, they are meant to bind them. It is a misfortune that to-day they are so distorted that they have become a potent cause of strife and mutual slaughter.

It will, perhaps, now be clear why I can have no concern with Asaf Ali Saheb's case. I would grant that he would be beaten in a contest between him and a Leaguer. Let it be further granted that such will be the case in the majority of such contests. It will in no way weaken my position. It will prove the superior organizing ability of the League and its popularity among the Muslims. I have not doubted either. My case is incredibly simple. I must not be called upon to make any admission about the status of the League before thinking of unity through the League. I must not be disloyal to the Muslim nationalists, however insignificant they may be considered to be. I ask the Khan Bahadur, the writer of the letter under discussion, to exert his influence to bring the two communities together.

WHAT THE *MASNAVI* SAYS

“How I wish the beautiful truth embedded in these verses will be taken to heart by every one of us. Is not the Pakistan movement a denial of the obvious truth?”

I gladly publish the following sent to me by Advocate Rustomji Andhyarujina of Bombay:

“In the latest issue of *Harijan* while dealing with the letter of a Khan Bahadur from Delhi you write the following lines of eternal truth :

‘Religions are not for separating men from one another, they are meant to bind them.’

“These lines remind me of the immortal words of a famous Persian poet put into the mouth of God who addresses Moses in verse 14 of the poem, *viz.*,

‘Thou hast come to this earth to unite; thou hast not come to this earth to separate.’

Original :

*To barae Vast kardan amadi
Na barae Fasl kardan amadi.*

“I give below a faithful translation of the whole poem in order to show the beauty and the grandeur of the truth contained in the above verse :

Moses once saw on the road a shepherd who was exclaiming thus :

“Oh God Almighty !

Tell me where Thou art, so that I may become

Thy servant, stitch Thy heavy shoes, comb Thy hair,

Kiss Thy hand, rub Thy feet, and sweep the floor for Thee to sleep.

If Thou wouldst fall ill in future, like Thy kith and kin I would grieve for Thee.

Oh my Lord, my life is sacrificed to Thee, together with my children and all the property that I own.

Aye, all my sheep are sacrificed to Thee : every call of ‘hae-ha’ of mine addressed to my way-ward sheep is for Thy remembrance!”

In this strain that shepherd was speaking when Moses spoke

to him thus : "Whom art thou addressing ?"

He replied: "I am addressing Him who created us, the One from whom became manifest this earth and this revolving celestial globe (charkh)."

Moses exclaimed : "Alas, thy head has become arrogant and discourteous; thou hast ceased to be a Mussalman; thou hast turned an infidel.

If thou dost not tie up (stop) these words in thy palate, the fire (of Hell) will spread out and consume the whole world."

The poor shepherd cried in agony : "Oh Moses, thou hast stitched my mouth; the repentance that thou hast caused in me has consumed my soul."

He tore his robe into tatters, heaved a burning sigh, set his face towards the forest and disappeared in its midst.

A voice reached Moses from God saying : "Why didst thou separate My slave from Me ?

Thou hast come to this earth to unite; thou hast not come to this earth to separate.

Knowest thou that We do not see the exterior nor the words; We see only the interior and the real thing."

No sooner did Moses hear these words of censure from the Almighty God than he ran after the shepherd in the thickness of the wood.

At last Moses was able to find him out in the wilderness. The Prophet told him : "Good news for thee! for, God has given me permission to tell thee, do not worry about the conventional modes and forms whilst addressing Me, but instead speak out whatever thy narrow heart prompts thee to speak."

-From *Masnavi-e-Molavi*

How I wish the beautiful truth embedded in these verses will be taken to heart by every one of us. Is not the Pakistan movement a denial of the obvious truth ?

HINDU-MUSLIM TANGLE

“Religion binds man to God and man to man. Does Islam bind Muslim only to Muslim and antagonize the Hindu? Was the message of the Prophet peace only for and between Muslims and war against Hindus or non-Muslims?.....Those who are instilling this poison into the Muslim mind are rendering the greatest disservice to Islam.”

The partition proposal has altered the face of the Hindu-Muslim problem. I have called it an untruth. There can be no compromise with it. At the same time I have said that, if the eight crores of Muslims desire it, no power on earth can prevent it, notwithstanding opposition violent or non-violent. It cannot come by honourable agreement.

That is the political aspect of it. But what about the religious and the moral which are greater than the political? For, at the bottom of the cry for partition is the belief that Islam is an exclusive brotherhood, and anti-Hindu. Whether it is against other religions, it is not stated. The newspaper cuttings in which partition is preached describe Hindus as practically untouchables. Nothing good can come out of Hindus or Hinduism. To live under Hindu rule is a sin. Even joint Hindu-Muslim rule is not to be thought of. The cuttings show that Hindus and Muslims are already at war with one another and that they must prepare for the final tussle.

Time was when Hindus thought that Muslims were the natural enemies of Hindus. But as is the case with Hinduism, ultimately it comes to terms with the enemy and makes friends with it. The process had not been completed. As if nemesis had overtaken Hinduism, the Muslim League started the same game and taught that there could be no blending of the two cultures. In this connection I have just read a booklet by Shri Atulanand Chakrabarti, which shows that ever since the contact of Islam

with Hinduism there has been an attempt on the part of the best mind of both to see the good points of each other, and to emphasize inherent similarities rather than seeming dissimilarities. The author has shown Islamic history in India in a favourable light. If he has stated the truth and nothing but the truth, it is a revealing booklet which all Hindus and Muslims may read with profit. He has secured a very favourable and reasoned preface from Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan and several other Muslim testimonials. If the evidence collected there reflects the true evolution of Islam in India, then the partition propaganda is anti-Islamic.

Religion binds man to God and man to man. Does Islam bind Muslim only to Muslim and antagonize the Hindu? Was the message of the Prophet peace only for and between Muslims and war against Hindus or non-Muslims? Are eight crores of Muslims to be fed with this which I can only describe as poison? Those who are instilling this poison into the Muslim mind are rendering the greatest disservice to Islam. I know that it is not Islam. I have lived with and among Muslims not for one day, but closely and almost uninterruptedly for twenty years. Not one Muslim taught me that Islam was an anti-Hindu religion.

CURSE OF UNTOUCHABILITY

"I know this touch-me-not-ism is deep-rooted in Hinduism as it is practised to-day. But there is no reason why it should be tolerated by Congressmen. If they will be correct in their behaviour, they will pave the way for a radical transformation of Hindu society."

Several correspondents protest against my referring to the arguments advanced in favour of partition. They say that Islam is not exclusive, and that it teaches universal brotherhood and toleration. I have never denied this claim. It was because of my knowledge of Islam that I felt grieved over the arguments which go to prove the contrary. Almost every Muslim writing I take up now-a-days contains disparagement of Hindus and Hinduism. It cannot be otherwise, if the case for partition is to be proved. But my correspondents are angry when I point out the anomaly. They say I have hastily come to the conclusion from isolated writings of unimportant Muslims. Unfortunately, the arguments referred to by me have proceeded from important Muslims.

But where the writers score over me is in regard to Hindu untouchability. They say in effect: "You should be ashamed of bringing the charge of untouchability against the Muslim League. First cast out the beam from the Hindu eye before you attempt to deal with the mote in the Muslim eye. Has not the Hindu maintained for a thousand years complete boycott of Muslims? He will not drink or eat with him. He will not inter-marry. He will not even let his house to him. Can you conceive a more effective isolation of a whole community than the Hindu has carried out? Will it not be a just nemesis if the Muslim now turns round and pays you in your own coin?"

I have admitted as much. Whatever the Muslims do by way of retaliation will be richly deserved by Hindus.

My question was and is, should they do so? Does it behove a great political party to play upon religious prejudices?

Whatever the Muslim League does or does not do, it behoves thoughtful Hindus to take note of the deserved taunt and purge Hinduism of its exclusiveness. It will not be protected by artificial barriers which have no sanction in ancient Hinduism or reason. Well did Maulana Abul Kalam Azad say the other day how sick he was of hearing the cry at railway stations of Hindu and Muslim tea or water. I know this touch-me-not-ism is deep-rooted in Hinduism as it is practised to-day. But there is no reason why it should be tolerated by Congressmen. If they will be correct in their behaviour, they will pave the way for a radical transformation of Hindu society. The message of anti-untouchability does not end in merely touching the so-called untouchables. It has a much deeper meaning.

PAKISTAN AND CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

“When we have learnt wisdom, we shall cease to think in terms of separate electorates and two nations. I believe in the innate goodness of human nature. I, therefore, swear by the Constituent Assembly.”

Q. The ‘two-nations’ theory is by way of a counter-blast to the demand for a Constituent Assembly which is about as absurd as the other thing. To me the idea of a Constituent Assembly ignores the existing conditions. 95 per cent of our people are illiterate, and nearly cent per cent are swayed by religious prejudices; and then there is the additional factor of corruption. And the fatal objection to a Constituent Assembly is that without a genuine desire on the part of the majority to give effect to safeguards, the best of these are bound to prove unreal.

A. Surely, you cannot speak of the Constituent Assembly side by side with Pakistan. The latter is wrong, as I conceive it, in every way. There is nothing wrong in the idea of a Constituent Assembly. At its worst, dangers surround its formation. Every big experiment is beset with dangers. These risks must be taken. Every effort should be made to minimize them. But there seems to me to be nothing like a Constituent Assembly for achieving the common purpose. I admit the difficulty for illiteracy. Indeed, adult suffrage was introduced at the instance of Muslim nationalists including the late Ali Brothers. The danger of corruption is also there. The greater the organization the less felt is the effect of corruption, because it is so widely distributed. Thus, in the Congress there are much corruption and jealousy, but they are confined to those few who run the machinery. But the vast body of Congressmen are untouched by these defects, though they profit by the good the Congress does. The danger you mention about safeguards will be reduced to the vanishing point if they come through a Constituent Assembly. For, safeguards laid down by the representatives elected by the

adult Muslim population will depend for their safety not on the good-will or honesty of the majority, but on the strength of the awakened Muslim masses. Fatality really attaches to your wrong conception of the majority, not to a Constituent Assembly. There is a majority of Hindus undoubtedly, but we observe that in popular political assemblies, parties are not rigidly divided according to religious opinions, but they are according to political and other opinions. The curse of communalism became intensified by the introduction of separate electorates. The cry for partition is the logical outcome, but it is also the strongest condemnation of separate electorates. When we have learnt wisdom, we shall cease to think in terms of separate electorates and two nations. I believe in the innate goodness of human nature. I, therefore, swear by the Constituent Assembly. The Muslim vote will surely decide the issue so far as their special interest is concerned. Arguing communally, therefore, the fear, if there is any about a Constituent Assembly, should surely be on the part of the Hindus. For if the Muslim vote goes in favour of partition, they have either to submit not to one but many partitions or to a civil war. As things are, all satisfy themselves by passing resolutions and seeing their names in print. In practice, all of us remain where we are in a state of subjection. A Constituent Assembly is a reality. It will not be a debating or legislative, irresponsible body. By registering its final decision, it will decide the fate of millions of human beings. You may oppose it. If you are successful in your opposition, there is the dread prospect of anarchy, not an orderly civil war. There seems to me to be no solution of the painful deadlock except through a Constituent Assembly.

AN ENGLISH SUGGESTION

"Pakistan cannot be worse than foreign domination. I have lived under the latter, though not willingly. If God so desires it, I may have to become a helpless witness to the undoing of my dream. But I do not believe that the Muslims really want to dismember India."

An English friend writes thus:

"It is still reasonable at present to proceed on the assumption that the Muslims would accept something a good deal less than 'Pakistan.' But the trouble is that the longer the time that elapses without any compromise solution being reached, the stronger and more insistent will be the cry for 'Pakistan,' so that in the end civil war or partition will be the only alternatives. I think the view held by some that there is nothing to be done but to wait upon events is fatal. It is up to the British now to use all their powers of persuasion and statesmanship to *compel* the parties to settle.

"The crux of the matter is who is to control power at the Centre—Hindus or Muslims? Over this the Congress must be prepared to make great concessions. The principles of parliamentary democracy and majority rule must be jettisoned. They are not applicable when two distinct civilizations have got to lie down together. Majority rule from the Muslim point of view will mean or, at any rate, contain the menace of the dominance of one civilization over the other. If the Congress do not recognize this quickly, I am afraid that partition will become, if not the only alternative, the best one—which will give you an idea of how bad the other alternatives will be!

"If the Congress can be brought to see the need for great concessions on this point, I am sure compromise solutions can be found. I hold this necessity to be vital."

Of course, the British Government can do much. They have done much by force. They can make the parties come to a solution by force. But they need not go so far. What they have done hitherto is to prevent a proper solution. In proof of my statement I commend the esteemed correspondent to the columns of *Harijan*.

The only thing the British Government have to do is to change their attitude. Will they? They can retain their hold on India only by a policy of divide and rule. A living unity between Muslims and Hindus is fraught with danger to their rule. It would mean an end of it. Therefore, it seems to me that a true solution will come with the end of the rule, potentially, if not in fact.

What can be done under the threat of Pakistan? If it is not a threat but a desirable goal, why should it be prevented? If it is undesirable and meant only for the Muslims to get more under its shadow, any solution would be an unjust solution. It would be worse than no solution. Therefore I am entirely for waiting till the menace is gone. India's independence is a living thing. No make-believe will suit. The whole world is in the throes of a new birth. Anything done for a temporary gain would be tantamount to an abortion.

I cannot think in terms of narrow Hinduism or narrow Islam. I am wholly uninterested in a patch-work solution. India is a big country, a big nation composed of different cultures, which are tending to blend with one another, each complementing the rest. If I must wait for the completion of the process, I must wait. It may not be completed in my day. I shall love to die in the faith that it must come in the fulness of time. I should be happy to think that I had done nothing to hamper the process. Subject to this condition, I would do anything to bring about harmony. My life is made up of compromises, but they have been compromises that have brought me nearer the goal. Pakistan cannot be worse than foreign domination. I have lived under the latter, though not willingly. If God so desires it, I may have to become a helpless witness to the undoing of my dream. But I do not believe that the Muslims really want to dismember India.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

“The demand for partition puts an end to all effort for unity for the time being. I hold that communal understanding is not a pre-requisite to the British doing justice on their part. When they feel that they want to recognize India’s right of self-determination, all the difficulties that they put forth as obstacles in their path will melt away like ice before the sun’s rays.”

A god-fearing political friend among several other things wrote to Gandhiji regarding the Hindu-Muslim problem as follows:

“Again we have to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem. For that we should call a conference of all the communal leaders and party leaders. If we make an effort beforehand, we might become united by the time the Government is willing to call the Constituent Assembly. No time should be lost. The demands of the Mussalmans will mount up as the time goes on. I am certain God will help us to attain unity if we try for it in right earnest and without delay. God has put the reins of the country in your hands; you alone can make or mar her fate.”

Replying to the above in an article entitled Non-cooperation, Gandhiji wrote:

Hindu-Muslim unity is a morsel by itself. But my friend is on the wrong track when he suggests that unity should be hastened for fear of Muslims raising their demands. Demands against whom? India is as much theirs as anybody else’s. The way to unity lies through just demands once for all, not through ever-increasing demands, whether just or unjust. The demand for partition puts an end to all effort for unity for the time being. I hold that communal understanding is not a pre-requisite to the British doing justice on their part. When they feel that they want to recognize India’s right of self-determination, all the difficulties that they put forth as obstacles in their path will melt away like ice before the sun’s rays.

The right of self-determination means the right of determination by every group and ultimately every individual. The demand for a Constituent Assembly presumes that the determination of the groups and individuals will coincide. Should it happen otherwise and partition become the fashion, either we shall have partition or partitions rather than foreign rule, or we shall continue to wrangle among ourselves and submit to foreign rule, or else have a proper civil war. Anyway, the present suspense cannot continue. It has to end one way or the other. I am an optimist. I have every hope that when we come to grips, Hindus, Muslims, and all other will throw in their weight in favour of India which all will claim as their own.

THE HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

“India is a poor country full of Hindus and Mussalmans and others staying in every corner of it. To divide it into two is worse than anarchy. It is vivisection which cannot be tolerated.”

In his closing speech before the Congress Working Committee at Bombay, Gandhiji referred to the Hindu-Muslim question as it had been raised during the debate, and said:

If a conflict is there in store for us, who can prevent it? We have to be prepared even for anarchy and chaos, but we must have the faith that non-violence cannot result in chaos. But if somehow disorders take place, they will be a test of our non-violence. Non-violence is a force that gains in intensity with the increase in the violence that it has to deal with. I hope that you will get that power of non-violence before I die. But there is a message I should like to reach the ears of every Mussalman. India cannot win Independence if eight or more crores of Mussalmans are opposed to it. But I cannot believe that all of them are so opposed, until it is proved to me by the vote of every adult Mussalman. Let them declare that they want to have their political salvation apart from that of Hindus. India is a poor country full of Hindus and Mussalmans and others staying in every corner of it. To divide it into two is worse than anarchy. It is vivisection which cannot be tolerated—not because I am a Hindu, for I am speaking from this platform as representative of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and all else. But I will say to them: ‘Vivisect me before you vivisect India. You shall not do what even the Moghuls, who ruled over India for over two centuries, did not do.’ What I have said about the Muslims applies equally to Sikhs. If 30 lakhs of Sikhs will obstruct Indian Independence, we shall deal with them non-violently. Non-violent *Swaraj* cannot be won

except by non-violence. There are other obstacles, too, imposed by the existence of an alien power. But we must strain every nerve to achieve communal peace. Islam means peace. That peace cannot be confined to the Muslims. It must mean peace for the whole world.

COMMUNAL UNITY

"A superficial study of British history has made us think that all power percolates to the people from parliaments. The truth is that power resides in the people and it is entrusted for the time-being to those whom they may choose as their representatives. Parliaments have no power or even existence independently of the people."

Everybody is agreed about the necessity of this unity. But everybody does not know that unity does not mean mere political unity which may be imposed. It does, however, mean an unbreakable heart-unity. The first thing essential for achieving such unity is for every Congressman, whatever his religion may be, to represent in his own person Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian, Jew, etc., shortly every Hindu and non-Hindu. He has to feel his identity with every one of the millions of the inhabitants of Hindustan. In order to realize this, every Congressman will cultivate personal friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own. He should have the same regard for the other faiths as he has for his own.

In such a happy state of things, there would be no disgraceful cry at the stations such as "Hindu water" and "Muslim water" or "Hindu tea" and "Muslim tea." There would be no separate rooms or pots for Hindus and non-Hindus in schools and colleges, no communal schools, colleges and hospitals. The beginning of such a revolution has to be made by Congressmen without any political motive behind the correct conduct. Political unity will be its natural fruit.

The implication of such heart-unity may seem startling, though it is the logical necessity. Congressmen cannot aim at parliamentary power in opposition to persons of other faiths. Congressmen, therefore, will refrain, so long as these differences last, from entering the parliamentary arena.

We have long been accustomed to think that power comes only through legislative assemblies. I have regarded this belief as a grave error brought about by inertia or hypnotism. A superficial study of British history has made us think that all power percolates to the people from parliaments. The truth is that power resides in the people and it is entrusted for the time being to those whom they may choose as their representatives. Parliaments have no power or even existence independently of the people. It has been my effort for the last twenty-one years to convince the people of this simple truth. Civil disobedience is the store-house of power. Imagine a whole people unwilling to conform to the laws of the legislature, and prepared to suffer the consequences of non-compliance! They will bring the whole legislative and executive machinery to a stand-still. The police and the military are of use to coerce minorities, however powerful they may be. But no police or military coercion can bend the resolute will of a people, out for suffering to the uttermost.

And parliamentary procedure is good only when its members are willing to conform to the will of the majority. In other words, it is fairly effective only among compatibles.

Here in India, we have been pretending to work the parliamentary system under separate electorates which have created artificial incompatibles. We can never bring about living unity out of these artificial entities being brought together on a common platform. Such legislatures may function. But they can only be a platform for wrangling and sharing the crumbs of power that may fall from rulers, whoever they may be. These rule with a rod of iron, and prevent the opposing elements from flying at one another's throats. I hold the emergence of complete Independence to be an impossibility out of such a disgrace.

COMMUNAL UNITY

“Separate electorates have resulted in the separation of hearts. They pre-supposed mutual distrust and conflict of interests. They have tended to perpetuate differences and deepen the distrust.”

Freedom will not come through parliamentary effort. Therefore, communal pacts, whilst they are good if they can be had, are valueless unless they are backed by the union of hearts. Without it, there can be no peace in the land. Even Pakistan can bring no peace, if there is no union of hearts. This union can come only by mutual service and co-operative work.

Separate electorates have resulted in the separation of hearts. They pre-supposed mutual distrust and conflict of interests. They have tended to perpetuate differences and deepen the distrust. How to get out of the tangle is the question. I want just now to confine myself to the four Muslim majority provinces. In them, there is natural Pakistan in the sense that the permanent majority can rule the minority. I hold it to be utterly wrong thus to divide man from man by reason of religion which is liable to change. What conflict of interest can there be between Hindus and Muslims in the matter of revenue, sanitation, police, justice, or the use of public conveniences? The difference can only be in religious usage and observances with which a secular State has no concern.

Congressmen, if they are not to merge in the Hindus as Hindus, must rigidly abstain from the legislatures and local bodies governed by separate electorates. In these provinces, the separate electorates must be taken to have come from the Hindu demand in the supposed Hindu interest. But a Congress Hindu has no interest apart from his Muslim brother. Therefore, he must not enter the electoral bodies where Hindu and Muslim interests are falsely regarded as separate and even antagonistic. If he

enters these bodies, he can do so only to divide the majority members, *i.e.*, to take sides with one Muslim Party or another. If I could make all Hindus Congress-minded, I would withdraw every Hindu member from these bodies and put the Muslim members on their honour. I would seek to influence them from outside these bodies by being friends with them and rendering disinterested service. I would be indifferent to their manning all the services. At the most, an infinitesimal percentage can have a share in them. And it is a superstition to suppose that these services can oppress a people who have become conscious of human dignity and human rights and know how to enforce them. Since the vast majority of Congressmen are Hindus in at least three Muslim majority provinces, they have a rare opportunity of showing their non-violent strength, their disinterestedness, their utter freedom from the communal taint, and their ability to submit to the rule of their Muslim fellow-countrymen. They will do this not in a huff, but as true nationalists and friends of the Muslims. Remaining outside, they will probably better protect the just interests of Hindus as citizens. For, a Congress Hindu is not any the less a Hindu because he claims to represent equally, as he must, all the other faiths in himself. For, as I have said, so far as the State is concerned, its capacity for service stops short of the service of the different faiths, and the services it can render apply to all irrespective of their faiths. Therefore, Congressmen have a rare opportunity of showing undefiled nationalism in these provinces. They will incidentally show the other minorities that they have nothing to fear from the majorities if they know the true way. We must get out of the miasma of religious majorities and minorities. Why is a Parsi's interest different from a Hindu's or Muslim's, so far as the State is concerned? Did not Dadabhai and Pherozeshah rule the Congress while they lived not by Congress grace or patronage, but by right of service and merit? Did their rule injure any Hindu or Muslim interest? Were these interests ever in conflict on the Congress platform? And is not the Congress a voluntary State?

HINDU-MUSLIM PUZZLE

"As one representing all communities, I would expect not only Hindus but Congress-minded Muslims and others too, to avoid the legislatures and elective bodies. These abstainers will hold the scales evenly between all communities and seek to affect the legislatures from outside. Whether they are many or only a few, they will play the role of wise

Q. In your proposed solution of the Hindu-Muslim puzzle, do you expect all the Hindus to abstain from the legislatures or only a part? If only a part, will not the most reactionary Hindus get in and make things worse than now? And if you expect Congressmen to affect the Muslim mind from outside, why can't you do the same and perhaps more effectively by being inside?

A. I do not expect all the Hindus to abstain. I know that all Hindu seats will be filled by non-Congress Hindus. Congress Hindus, if they go in, will be ground down between the two stones of the communal *chakki* without doing any good to anybody. I do not approach the question as a Hindu. I approach it as a Congressman, seeking to represent equally all communities. But for the artificial system introduced in the composition of the Indian legislatures, all the members would be representing not communities but their parties, grouped according to their non-communal shibboleths. As one representing all communities, I would expect not only Hindus but Congress-minded Muslims and others, too, to avoid the legislatures and elective bodies. These abstainers will hold the scales evenly between all communities and seek to affect the legislatures from outside. Whether they are many or only a few, they will play the role of wise men. If all listened to me, the communal question would disappear from our midst. By entering the legislatures the Congress Hindus become interlopers, and act weakly for fear of offending one party or the other.

This I know, that at the present moment the legislatures are, and must become, part of the war machinery. They have no choice. They will not be allowed to function, if they obstruct the war effort. How could the rulers, whose sole occupation is to prosecute the war, do otherwise ?

Q. Why not advise Congressmen to withdraw from the provincial legislatures, too, where the Hindus are in a majority ?

A. Because I do not want the non-Muslim minority parties to act as if they were the majority and carry on the government in these provinces. It would be a false position to which the Congress would be a willing party, if the Congress members withdrew. In these provinces, therefore, abstention cannot solve the communal tangle, and will bring about an unintended and undesirable state of things.

TEST OF HONESTY

"The general tendency is to make use of the opportunities which seem to be open to you for seizing power. It is difficult for people to understand when I suggest that the opportunity is a trap."

Q. What you have said about Congressmen in the Muslim majority provinces is true enough. But your honesty will be tested by the readiness with which Congressmen follow your advice.

A. I must emphatically repudiate the test. I have begun to write about the subject in order to educate the Congress mind. If I had carried conviction to the members of the Working Committee, I would not have needed to preach my solution. It would have been reduced to practice long ago. But I failed. The step I have advised carries weighty implications without whose acceptance the solution has no meaning. One implication is confidence in the truth of one's step. I admit it is unusual. The general tendency is to make use of the opportunities which seem to be open to you for seizing power. It is difficult for people to understand when I suggest that the opportunity is a trap. To my mind, it has already proved to be so. But it is not so clear to average Congressman. I hope, through these columns, to make clear what is at present obscure. Those who doubt my honesty do not help me or themselves. But whether they do or not, I must continue to preach so long as I hold to the truth of my solution.

AN APPEAL TO QUAID-E-AZAM

"I observe from Quaid-e-Azam's speeches that he has no quarrel with the Hindus. He wants to live at peace with them. I plead, therefore, for a juster estimate of men and things in papers representing the policy and programme of the Muslim League."

I have been painfully but regularly going through the English weeklies that come to me and that are devoted to the cause of the Muslim League. I read them so as to keep myself informed of what the Muslim mind, as influenced by the Muslim League, thinks. Not a week passes but these weeklies contain what to me appear to be distortions of truth and vilification of the Congress and Congressmen and Hindus. What has prompted me to write these lines is a virulent attack on Hinduism in one of the weeklies. Here is an extract from the article :

"Hinduism is the greatest curse of India, and it is based on intolerance and inequality. To call one's self a 'Hindu' is to confess that one is reactionary and narrow-minded. No decent, civilized, honest and sincere human being, who knows what Hinduism is and what it stands for, would like to be known as a Hindu or join this faith of primitive barbarians. For, it is on barbarity that this so-called religion is based. No other word can describe the state of 97 per cent of the population who have been decreed by the gods and goddesses of this precious religion as impure and unclean beings, fit only to serve the remaining 3 per cent of the population.....We would far rather suggest to the students to prepare in their laboratories of the mind deadly bombs which would completely smash and destroy Hinduism—the greatest menace to India's welfare and well-being."

I hope I shall not be told that the article in question is taken from another newspaper. It has been taken in order to hold up Hinduism to scorn. Though the founder of this paper is Quaid-e-Azam himself, and it is issued under the direction of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Hon. Secretary of the League, I fancy that they have not seen the

article in question.

What will be the state of Hindus under Pakistan? Will they be suppressed as barbarians? There is no attempt in the papers at looking at the other side. The policy adopted in the papers must lead to the promotion of bitterness and strife between the two communities. If the end is to be attained through strife and force, and not by persuasion and argument, I can have nothing to say. But I observe from Quaid-e-Azam's speeches that he has no quarrel with the Hindus. He wants to live at peace with them. I plead, therefore, for a juster estimate of men and things in papers representing the policy and programme of the Muslim League.¹

¹ *Defending the Indefensible*: I have read Quaid-e-Azam's answer to my appeal. It has caused me deep pain. I had expected a better response. The reproduction of the whole offending article would make worse reading. For the whole of it is venomous. Quaid-e-Azam knows that I do not hesitate to criticize any party or person whenever the occasion demands criticism. I have more than once criticized unbecoming writings in the non-Muslim Press.

I do not know the writer of the offending article. If he is a Hindu, it makes Quaid-e-Azam's defence of it all the worse for it. I am sorry that Quaid-e-Azam has resorted to special pleading for defending the indefensible. This unexpected defence of an article designed to wound deep susceptibilities makes ominous reading.—*Harijan* : March 22, 1942.

‘THE NAKED FACT’

“If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with Hindus and others, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis, they must have the partition, unless Hindus want to fight against such a division.”

Characterizing the British Government's proposal for dissolving political deadlock as 'ill-fated' and 'too ridiculous to find acceptance anywhere,' Gandhiji deplored that its bearer should have been Sir Stafford Cripps 'acclaimed as a radical among radicals and a friend of India,' and further wrote :

But it is no use brooding over the past or British mistakes. It is more profitable to look within. The British will take care of themselves, if we will take care of ourselves. Our mistakes or rather defects are many. Why blame the British for our own limitations? Attainment of Independence is an impossibility till we have solved the communal tangle. We may not blind ourselves to the naked fact. How to tackle the problem is another question. We will never tackle it so long as either or both parties think that Independence will or can come without any solution of the tangle. There are two ways of solving what has almost become insoluble. The one is the royal way of non-violence, and the other of violence. In the first way, the formal consent or co-operation of the other party is unnecessary. If there is a dispute between two boys over the ownership of an apple, the non-violent way is to leave the apple for the other party to take, well knowing that it would mean non-co-operation on the surrendering party's part. The second way is the usual way of violence. There the parties fight with each other till one is for the time being worsted. All interested in freedom have to make the choice. I suppose the choice has already been made by the chief actors. But the rank

and the file do not know their own minds. It is necessary for them, if they can, to think independently and take to non-violent action in terms of unity. It consists in Hindus and Muslims on the wayside fraternizing with one another, if they believe that joint life is a perfect possibility, nay a necessity. Whether those who believe in the 'two nations' theory and communal partition of India can live as friends co-operating with one another, I do not know. If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with Hindus and others, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis, they must have the partition unless Hindus want to fight against such a division. So far as I see, such a preparation is silently going on on behalf of both parties. That way lies suicide. Each party will probably want British or foreign aid. In that case, good-bye to Independence. 'The fight will,' then, range round no Independence, but the imaginary apple after the manner of the imaginary boys. I dare not contemplate the actuality. I should not like to be its living witness. I would love to see a joint fight for Independence. In the very process of securing Independence, it is highly likely that we shall have forgotten our quarrels. But if we have not, it will be then only time to quarrel, if we must.

NOT AN INCITEMENT

"I claim Indians of all religions as my equal brothers, whether they believe me or not. I would, therefore, love to prevent every one from quarrelling."

Q. You have written :

"If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation.....no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis, they must have the partition, unless Hindus want to fight against such a division. So far as I can see, such a preparation is silently going on on behalf of both parties."

As far as the Muslims are concerned, I can say with better knowledge than you that there is no such preparation. It would be foolish in the midst of the present armageddon. But since you are apparently aware of the preparation to fight on the part of Hindus, is it not criminal for you not to prevent your co-religionists from this suicidal activity? Your article is both cowardly and mischievous, indeed it is an incitement to the Hindus.

A. This is the mildest indictment I have picked up from many I have received. Even from this, much poison has been removed. It is perhaps wise to notice some of the criticism to which I am exposed. I must not mind it. It has been my lot throughout my public career. I suppose it is that of every public servant. But when the criticism is ignorant, as this is, it harms the critic and the cause he espouses. I take notice of it in the hope that sober men will use their influence to restrain ignorant criticism. I have no special knowledge of the preparation on behalf of the Hindus.

All the knowledge I have is derived from the speeches of the leaders of both the parties and from the cuttings I receive from correspondents. They are proof positive of the preparations to which I have referred. But if what you say is right, in spite of the writings in the Muslim Press, no preparation on one side alone can possibly provoke strife. It takes two to make a quarrel. You

would be right, if I did not do so, in saying that it would be criminal on my part not to prevent my "co-religionists from this suicidal activity." You write about my co-religionists. I recognize none in such matters. Nor do they recognize me. For, I claim Indians of all religions as my equal brothers, whether they believe me or not. I would, therefore, love to prevent every one from quarrelling. All I write in these columns is designed to make reason rather than the sword the arbiter between rival parties. Hence, the sentence you quote from my writing. I invite you to help me in my mission of peace. You can begin by understanding me and my writings.

ROTATORY GOVERNMENT

"When we are untrammelled by foreign or other authority and free, we shall know how to deal with the day-to-day problems...The arbiter, then, will be either the sword or reason."

Q. In order to solve the communal tangle, why not divide India into two sections as far as population goes, *e.g.*, Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis in one, and Hindus, Sikhs and Depressed Classes in the other. Let the first section rule for the period of five years by means of elected representatives, and the second section come in similarly later. Would this not allay the present mistrust ? As for Princes' India, could a Committee of elected Princes be entrusted with the work of governing all the States ?

A. Your question reads well on paper; but your suggestion, if acted upon, must break down in practice. The act of government is not the simple thing you seem to imagine. What you suggest may work as a toy when the strings are pulled by armed authority. It won't be our government. The puller of the strings will govern. That is the old way. I have presented the better way—the non-violent method. In either case, the first condition is that every trace of foreign authority should be removed from the land. Then and then only shall we know our real selves—our strength as well as our weaknesses. When we are untrammelled by foreign or other authority and free, we shall know how to deal with the day-to-day problems. We won't, then, be governed in the neat way mentioned by you. The arbiter, then, will be either the sword or reason.

THE DIFFERENCE

"I am firmly of opinion that there is no unity whilst the third party is there to prevent it. It created the artificial division and it keeps it up. In its presence both Hindus and Muslims, and for that matter all seemingly conflicting or disgruntled interests and elements, will look to it for support and will get it."

Q. You have repeated in your interview to the Press in Bombay, what you have said often, that nothing can prevent the Muslims from having what they want unless the objectors would fight over the issue. What is the difference between you and Shri Rajgopalachari's attitude?

A. Though he has quoted me in his support, I see the same difference between him and me that there is between chalk and cheese. He yields the right of secession now to buy unity in the hope of keeping away the Japanese. I consider the vivisection of India to be a sin. My statement amounts to the enunciation of the proposition that I cannot prevent my neighbour from committing a sin. Shri Rajgopalachari would be party in the sin, if the neighbour chooses to commit it. I cannot be party. What is more, I am firmly of opinion that there is no unity whilst the third party is there to prevent it. It created the artificial division and it keeps it up. In its presence both Hindus and Muslims, and for that matter all seemingly conflicting or disgruntled interests and elements, will look to it for support and will get it. Their interest is greater than the independence of their country. No one need throw my other statement in my face *viz.*, that there is no independence without unity. I do not withdraw a word of it. It is an obvious truth. From its contemplation I have discovered the formula 'of inviting the British power to withdraw. Their withdrawal does not by itself bring independence. It may induce unity or it may lead to chaos. There is also the risk of another

power filling in the vacancy if it is there. If, however, the withdrawal is orderly and voluntary, the British not only gain a moral height but secure the ungrudging friendship of a great nation. I wish all conflicting elements and interests will make a combined effort to rid India of foreign domination. If they do not, any understanding with them will be like a house built on sand. Fear of the Japanese occupation of India has blinded C. R. to obvious truth. Independence sheds all fear—fear of the Japanese, of anarchy, and of the wrath of the British lion.

UNITY TO FOLLOW FREEDOM

“When bondage is done away with, not merely the two organizations, but all parties will find it to their interest to come together and make the fullest use of liberty in order to evolve a National Government suited to the genius of India.”

Replying to the question of the Nagpur correspondent of The Hindu, Madras, as to what had led him to declare now that communal unity would follow freedom, whereas he had been saying for years that there could be no Swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity, Gandhiji said :

Time is a merciless enemy, if it is also a merciful friend and healer. I claim to be amongst the oldest lovers of Hindu-Muslim unity and I remain one even to-day. I have been asking myself why every whole-hearted attempt made by all, including myself, to reach unity has failed, and failed so completely that I have entirely fallen from grace and am described by some Muslim papers as the greatest enemy of Islam in India. It is a phenomenon I can only account for by the fact that the third power, even without deliberately wishing it, will not allow real unity to take place. Therefore, I have come to the reluctant conclusion that the two will come together almost immediately after the British power comes to a final end in India. If independence is the immediate goal of the Congress and the League, then, without needing to come to any terms, all will fight together to be free from bondage.

When bondage is done away with, not merely the two organizations but all parties will find it to their interest to come together and make the fullest use of liberty in order to evolve a National Government suited to the genius of India. I do not care what it is called. Whatever it is, in order to be stable, it has to represent the masses in the fullest sense of the term. And, if

it is to be broad-based upon the will of the people, it must be predominantly non-violent. Anyway, up to my last breath, I hope I shall be found working to that end, for I see no hope for humanity without the acceptance of non-violence. We are witnessing the bankruptcy of violence from day to day. There is no hope for humanity if this senseless fierce mutual slaughter is to continue.

TO MUSLIM CORRESPONDENTS

"I do not know how to get rid of the distrust. 'Give Pakistan,' say my critics. I answer: 'It is not in my giving.' If I felt convinced of the rightness of the demand, I should certainly work for it side by side with the League. But I do not. I would like to be convinced. Nobody has yet told me all its implications."

"How can you think of a mass movement for liberation without first closing with Muslims?" ask Muslim correspondents, whose letters fill my file.

I used at one time to think like my correspondents. But I see that for the moment I cannot reach the Muslim mind. The Muslim League blocks my way. I try to read the League newspapers. They give me a peep into the League mind, in so far as they represent it. In their opinion, I am thoroughly untrustworthy. Even my services during the *Khilafat* days wear for them a sinister meaning. I am quite clear in my mind that this is a passing phase. I am not aware of having done a single disservice to any Muslim cause or Muslim person. Thank God, even to-day I claim numerous Muslim friends.

I do not know how to get rid of the distrust. "Give Pakistan," say my critics. I answer: "It is not in my giving." If I felt convinced of the rightness of the demand, I should certainly work for it side by side with the League. But I do not. I would like to be convinced. Nobody has yet told me all its implications. Those that are described in the anti-Pakistan Press are too terrible to contemplate. But I cannot take them from the Opposition. Only the protagonists know what they want and mean. I plead for such an exposition. Surely, Pakistanis want to convert the Opposition, not to force them. Has an attempt been ever made to meet the Opposition in a friendly manner and to convert them? I am sure the Congress is willing to be converted, let alone me.

But what I am to do meanwhile? I feel that now is the time for India to play an effective part in the fortunes of the war, if she becomes free from British servitude. I am convinced, too, that nothing stands in the way of that freedom except British unwillingness to give up India as the happy hunting-ground for the British that she has been for three centuries. If she gives up India, she might as well give up fighting, says the Imperialist. If such is the case, what is all this war for? The original fighters are Great Britain and Germany. Was India the hidden stake between the two? This is all speculation all I know. The truth will be known presently. Thinking Indians cannot idle away their time. I think that even a large number, if not all of us, prepared to undergo any sacrifice that may fall to our lot, would impress the British rulers that they can no longer hold India as a British possession. I believe, too, that such a number is available. Needless to say, their action must be non-violent, irrespective of their belief, as even a military man's has often to be, on behalf of his cause. The fight has been conceived in the interest of the whole of India. The fighters will gain no more than the poorest Indian. They will fight, not to seize power, but to end the foreign domination, cost what it may. What will happen after? If ever we reach that stage, will depend upon how we act when the all-powerful British hand is withdrawn. We may quarrel among ourselves or we may adjust our quarrels and agree to set up ordered rule on behalf of the people. It may be a democratic constitution or unadulterated autocracy or oligarchy. The conception is not that of a settlement with the British Government. That could happen only if there were a settlement between the principal parties, and, as a preliminary, the Congress and the League. But that, so far as I can see, is not to be.

Therefore, the only settlement with the British Government can be that their rule should end leaving India to her fate. Thus, assuming that the British leave, there is no Government and no constitution, British or other. Therefore, there is no Central Government. Militarily the most powerful party may set up its rule and impose it

on India. If the people submit, Muslims may declare Pakistan and nobody may resist them. Hindus may do likewise, Sikhs may set up their rule in territories inhabited by them. There is no end to the possibilities. And to all this idle speculation let me suggest one more addition. The Congress and the League, being best organized parties in the country, may come to terms and set up a Provisional Government acceptable to all. And this may be followed by a duly elected Constituent Assembly.

The movement has only one aim—that is of displacing the British Power. If that happy event comes about and it is followed by a stable Government, it will most assuredly decide the fate of the war—I shall hope in a non-violent manner. India can show no other strength during this war at any rate. Why should not Muslims, who believe in Pakistan, but also believe in independent India, join such a struggle? If, on the other hand, they believe in Pakistan through British aid and under British aegis, it is a different story. I have no place in it.

FOR MUSLIM FRIENDS

"To-day there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan. It is Englistan. So, I say to all India, let us first convert it into the original Hindustan and then adjust all rival claims."

I have read with attention Quaid-e-Azam's reply to my article in *Harijan*. "Pakistan", according to him, "in a nutshell" "is a demand for carving out of India a portion to be wholly treated as an independent and Sovereign State." This Sovereign State can conceivably go to war against the one of which it was but yesterday a part. It can also equally conceivably make treaties with other States. All this can certainly be had, but surely not by the willing consent of the rest.

But it seems he does not want it by consent. For, he says: "Pakistan is an article of faith with Muslim India and we depend upon nobody except ourselves for the achievement of our goal." How is one to offer one's service in these circumstances?

But, later, he gives me hope, for he says: "Show your sincerity and frankness for an honourable settlement." In order to show both, I wrote the article to which the Quaid-e-Azam has objected. How else is one to show sincerity and frankness except through one's action and speech or pen?

Let me state my limitations. I cannot speak as a mere Hindu, for my Hinduism includes all religions. I can speak only as an Indian. If Pakistan, as defined above, is an article of faith with him, indivisible India is equally an article of faith with me. Hence, there is a stalemate.

But to-day there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan. It is Englistan. So, I say to all India, let us first convert it to the original Hindustan and then adjust all rival claims. This is surely clear. After the restoration of India to the nation, there will be no Central Government. The representatives will have to construct it. It may be one

Hindustan or many Pakistans.

If the Quaid-e-Azam really wants a settlement, I am more than willing and so is the Congress. He will forgive me for suggesting that his reply leaves on one the impression that he does not want a settlement. If he wants one, why not accept the Congress President's offer that Congress and League representatives should put their heads together and never part until they have reached a settlement. Is there any flaw or want of sincerity in this offer?

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"I am devoting my time and energy and I am even prepared to lay down my life for the mission which has been entrusted to me by God. Hindu-Muslim unity is dear to my life. I, have no mental reservation on the issue of Pakistan. Pakistan cannot be away from Hindustan. Let both and all of us strive for the attainment of freedom of India."

Addressing a most momentous session of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay on Aug. 8, 1942, just a day before his arrest, Gandhiji feelingly referred to the communal tangle and said:

There was a time when every Muslim was professing that India was his motherland. The Ali Brothers believed in it. I am not prepared to believe for a moment that it was a lie or bluff. I would prefer to be ignorant rather than to doubt my colleagues. Thousands of Hindus and Muslims have told me that if the Congress is really serious to solve the communal tangle and establish permanent unity, it can be achieved during my life-time only. From my very childhood, I am a firm believer in Hindu-Muslim and communal unity. From my very school days I have a firm conviction in the unity of India.

When I had been to Africa, I undertook a brief for a Muslim client. I championed their cause there. I never distrust them. I did not return from Africa as a disappointed or as a defeated man. I do not care for the abuses which are being hurled on me by some of my Muslim friends. I do not know what I have done that has offended them. I am undoubtedly a worshipper of cow. It is my belief that every creature on this earth is the creation of God. My friends, especially the Muslims, Maulana Bari and Maulana Azad, can testify to this fact. I dine with the Muslims. I dine with all without any consideration to their caste or religion.

I hate none and there is no hatred in me. The late Maulana Bari was my host in Lucknow. He was a thorough gentleman. It was the time when there was no mutual distrust or suspicion. Mr. Jinnah has been a Congressman in the past. He seems now to be misguided. I pray long life for him and wish that he may survive me. A day will certainly dawn when he will realize that I have never wronged him or the Muslims. I have the fullest confidence in the sincerity of the Muslims. I will never talk ill of them even if they kill me. They have every right to form any opinion of me, but I still continue to be the same man of the old days. Muslims may, in the heat of the moment, forget themselves and abuse me. Islam does not teach to abuse. If the Muslims of India are the true followers of the Holy Prophet, then let them follow his teachings faithfully. Their abuses are worse than bullets to me, but still I am prepared to welcome them.

A world federation could only be established by mutual agreement. I would pray to my Muslim brothers to judge for themselves dispassionately which is right and which is wrong. Let the issue be decided by a tribunal and let us all abide by the verdict of the tribunal. If the Muslim League is not prepared to accept this offer, then how can they expect to force the scheme upon others by mere coercion?

Let them persuade their fellow countrymen to their point of view and make them agreeable to the scheme of Pakistan. If they failed to convince and convert, this would lead to internal strife. I have no desire to live to witness such a tragedy. Islam never teaches its followers to hate any one. It preaches universal brotherhood and a spirit of mutual tolerance. I am devoting my time and energy and I am even prepared to lay down my life for the mission which has been entrusted to me by God. Hindu-Muslim unity is dear to my life. I have no mental reservation on the issue of Pakistan. Pakistan cannot be away from Hindustan. Let both and all of us strive for the attainment of freedom of India.

Mr. Jinnah does not seem to believe in the Congress programme and in the Congress demand. But I cannot

wait any longer for India's freedom. I cannot wait till Mr. Jinnah is converted for the immediate consummation of Indian freedom. I am very impatient. Communal unity is undoubtedly essential for country's freedom, but you must know it is freedom for all and not for any particular community. I wholeheartedly endorse the Maulana Saheb's¹ offer to the British that India be handed over to any community. I would not be sorry if the authority is transferred to the Muslim masses.

India is the home-land of Indian Muslims. For instance take the case of my son Harilal. He had embraced Islam. By changing his religion, can he disown his nationality and country? Supposing he is able to change his nationality and country, all the same he cannot disown his father. Under the persuasion of his mother, he wrote to me a letter. My wife told me that she was not sorry because her son had changed his religion, but was sorry because he was a drunkard. My grandson went in search of his father but when he found him, he saw that he was addicted to vices.....

¹ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

QUESTION BOX

HINDU-MUSLIM PROBLEM

Q. How do you propose to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem ?

A. By constantly insisting upon both the communities cultivating mutual respect and trust, and by insisting upon Hindus surrendering out of strength to the Mussalmans in every mundane matter and by showing that those who claim to be nationalists and are in an overwhelming majority should stand out in any unseemly competition for legislative or administrative control. I hope also to achieve the end by demonstrating that real *Swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, *Swaraj* is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

HOW TO BEGIN?

Q. Congress clamours for unity, but the principles which must be followed to attain that unity, *viz.*, Hindu-Muslim fellow-feeling, no caste distinctions, no hatred towards each other or towards foreigners, co-operative endeavour, all these are presented to audiences through the microphone but not acted upon. Tell me what are the duties of a Congress member. I would love to join and will put forth all my energy to do my bit for the country.

A. You need not mind what others do or ought to do. Charity begins at home. Let yours begin with yourself. Abolish all caste and religious or race distinctions from your heart. Be true to every one—Hindu, Muslim, Harijan, English etc. as you are, I hope, to yourself, and you will find that so far as you are concerned your difficulty will be solved and your example will be

copied by others. Be sure that you have banished all hate from your heart, and that you have no political or other objective in loving and serving your neighbour as if he was your own self.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Q. You can do Harijan work, you can organize *Khadi* and village industries, but when it comes to Hindu-Muslim unity, you find many excuses for not organizing it.

A. This charge has been brought against me by several Muslim correspondents unknown to me. But latterly it has been repeated with considerable vehemence by one who knows me intimately. The complainant challenges me to deal with the charge in *Harijan*. There can be no comparison between Harijans and Muslims. I owe a debt to Harijans in need of any assistance that can be given to them. Harijan work is humanitarian work. Muslims stand in no need of my humanitarianism. They are a powerful community standing in no such need. Any work done for Muslims after the Harijan style will be resented. To cite *Khadi* and village industries against me is thoughtless. These can be organized and are organized for all who will care to profit by them. As a matter of fact, both Hindus and Muslims, and, indeed, others too, profit by these activities. Hindu-Muslim unity stands on its own footing. I have tried and am still trying to do my share of the work. I may have achieved no visible success, but I have no doubt that the direction in which I am working is the right one and is bound to lead us to the goal.

UNITY INEVITABLE

Q. Would not the march to full responsible government be more rapid, if the Muslims were taken along.

A. Of course, it would be. Personally, I do not want anything which the Muslims oppose. But I have faith that the solution of the Hindu-Muslim tangle will come

much sooner than most people expect. I claim to be able to look at the whole position with a detached mind. There is no substance in our quarrels. Points of difference are superficial, those of contact are deep and permanent. Political and economic subjection is common to us. The same climate, the same rivers, the same fields supply both with air, water and food. Whatever, therefore, leaders, *Mahatmas* and *Maulanas* may say or do, the masses, when they are fully awakened, will assert themselves and combine for the sake of combating common evils.

The effect of the Socialist and Communist propaganda, too, is to bring the masses of both the communities together by emphasizing identity of interests. I have my differences with them, but I cannot withhold my admiration for their endeavour to demolish the superstition that keeps the different communities apart.

MUSLIM RULE=INDIAN RULE

Q. Would you prefer Muslim rule to British rule?

A. The question is badly put. You, being British, cannot get out of the habit of thinking that India is fit only to be ruled by some one. Muslim rule is equivalent to Indian rule. You might well ask me whether I would prefer Bengali or Maratha to British rule. Maratha, Bengali, Sikh, Dravidian, Parsi, Christian (Indian), Muslim—all will be Indian rule. It makes no difference to me that some Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation. It is enough for me that I do not consider them as such. They are sons of the soil. Muslims, considered separately, have eight crores of unarmed Muslims scattered over India to look to. But you have the whole British nation and your army of occupation to look to. You belong to the ruling race. You are less than one hundred thousand in the midst of 350 millions over whom you rule. It is a matter of shame both for you and us. I need not weigh whose is the greater shame. The sooner we get out of it, the better for both of us.

You will now understand my answer when I say that I would any day prefer Muslim rule to British rule. I have no doubt that, if British rule, which divides us by favouring one or the other as it suits the Britishers, were withdrawn to-day, Hindus and Muslims would forget their quarrels and live like brothers which they are. But supposing the worst happened and we had a civil war, it would last for a few days or months and we would settle down to business. In status we are equal. With you, it is different. You have disarmed us. Those of us who have been trained by you really belong to you rather than to us. We are no match for you in military power. You do not know how the rule has stunted the nation. Immediately British rule is really ended, we shall grow as never before, in spite of all forebodings.

NEED FOR TOLERANCE

Q. You regard Mahomed as a Prophet of God and hold him in high regard. You have even publicly spoken of him in the highest terms. I have heard and even seen reports in cold print to the effect that you have studied the Quran itself. All this, I must confess, has puzzled me. I am at a loss to understand how a person like you, with all your passion for truth and justice, who has never failed to gloze over a single fault in Hinduism or to repudiate as unauthentic the numerous corruptions that masquerade under it, can *bolus bolus* accept all that is in the Quran. I am not aware of your ever having called into question or denounced any iniquitous injunction of Islam. Against some of these I learnt to revolt when I was scarcely 18 or 20 years old, and time has since only strengthened that first feeling. (The questioner is a Mussalman friend.)

A. I stand by every word that I have written in connection with Islam. I have nowhere said that I believe literally in every word of the Quran, or for the matter of that of any scripture in the world. But it is no business of mine to criticize the scriptures of other faiths, or to point out their defects. It is and should be, however, my privilege to proclaim and practise the truths that there may be in them. I may not, therefore, criticize or condemn things in the Quran or the life of the Prophet that I cannot understand. But I welcome every opportunity

to express my admiration for such aspects of his life as I have been able to appreciate and understand. As for things that present difficulties, I am content to see them through the eyes of devout Mussalman friends, while I try to understand them with the help of the writings of eminent Muslim expounders of Islam. It is only through such a reverential approach to faiths other than mine that I can realize the principle of equality of all religions. But it is both my right and duty to point out the defects in Hinduism in order to purify it and to keep it pure. But when non-Hindu critics set about criticizing Hinduism and cataloguing its faults, they only blazon their own ignorance of Hinduism and their incapacity to regard it from the Hindu viewpoint. It distorts their vision and vitiates their judgment. Thus, my own experience of the non-Hindu critics of Hinduism brings home to me my limitations and teaches me to be wary of launching on a criticism of Islam or Christianity and their founders.

A MUSLIM'S DILEMMA

Q. We Muslims believe that the Prophet's life was wholly directed by God and truly non-violent, though not in your sense of the term. He never waged an offensive war, and he had the tenderest regard for the feelings of others, but when he was driven to a defensive war he drew his sword for a holy war, and he permits the use of the sword under conditions he has laid down. But your non-violence is different. You prescribe it under all conditions and circumstances. I do not think the Prophet would permit this. Whom are we to follow—you or the Prophet? If we follow you, we cease to be Muslims. If we follow the Prophet, we cannot join the Congress with its creed of extreme non-violence. Will you solve this dilemma?

A. I can only answer that, since you notice the difference, you should unhesitatingly follow the Prophet, not me. Only I would like to say that I claim to have studied the life of the Prophet and the Quran as a detached student of religions. And I have come to the conclusion that the teaching of the Quran is essentially in favour of non-violence. Non-violence is better than violence, it is said in the Quran. Non-violence is enjoined as a duty; vio-

lence is permitted as a necessity. I must refuse to sit in judgment on what the Prophet did. I must base my conduct on what the great teachers of the earth said, not on what they did. Prophethood came not from the wielding of the sword, it came from years of wrestling with God to know the truth. Erase these precious years of the great life, and you will have robbed the Prophet of his prophethood. It is these years of his life which made Mahomed a prophet. A prophet's life, after he is acknowledged as one, cannot be our guide. Only prophets can weigh the works of prophets. If a civilian can judge the merits of a soldier, a layman of a scientist, an ordinary man may judge a prophet, much less imitate him. If I handled a motor car, I should surely run it and me into the danger zone and probably into the jaws of death. How much more dangerous would it be, then, for me to imitate a prophet ! When the Prophet was asked why, if he could fast more than the prescribed times, the companions also could not, he promptly replied: "God gives me spiritual food which satisfies even the bodily wants; for you He has ordained the *Ramdan*. You may not copy me." I quote from memory.

INTEREST OF MINORITIES

Q. What guarantee is there that when *Swaraj* is obtained, the smaller communities such as the Parsis will not be ruled out by the larger ? We often talk of our noble relations, but what crucial test is there that in the *Swaraj* Parliament racial prejudice will not assert itself ?

A. The movement¹ is its own test. It is a movement of free growth of opinion. It is one of purification, and a nation purified will deserve the curse of mankind if it allows petty prejudices to rule its deliberations. Moreover, the methods being pursued by us provide every interest with power of self-defence. It is the secret of non-co-operation, that it arms the weakest of the community with the power of self-determination and protection.

¹ Non-co-operation Movement.

CONFUSION OF THOUGHT

Q. You will be responsible for a gross injustice if you persist in giving to India a majority Government with only 'safeguards' for the minorities. The latter ought to have an effective part in the actual government of the country.

A. You have evidently confused majority rule with Hindu rule implying that the Hindu majority is irremovable. The fact is that the majority in all the provinces is a mixed majority. The parties are not Muslims and Hindus; they are Congressmen, Independents, Muslim Leaguers, Muslim Independents, Labourites, etc. The Congress majority everywhere is a mixed majority and could be better balanced if there was no tension. The tension is a distemper. A distemper can never be a permanent feature of any growing society which India is. Whatever the outcome of the Muslim League demonstration and its claim, some day or other there will be a solution of the issues raised. The outcome will never be pure Muslim or Hindu majorities in any single province. The parties will be mixed and aligned according to different policies, unless democracy is crushed and autocracy reigns supreme in India as a whole, or India is vivisected into two or more dead parts. If you have followed my argument, it must be clear to you that there will never be a denial of power to any party or group so far as the Congress is concerned. Minorities are entitled to full protection of their rights, for so long as they have to divide power with others, they run the risk of their special rights being adulterated.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Q. Are you right in conceding the right of self-determination to Muslims in a matter so vitally affecting others also, viz., Hindus, Sikhs, etc.? Supposing the majority of the Muslims decide in favour of partition in terms of the Muslim League resolution, what happens to the self-determination of Hindus, Sikhs, etc., who will be minorities in the Muslim States? If you go on like this, where will be the end to it?

A. Of course, Hindus and Sikhs will have the same right. I have simply said that there is no other non-

violent method of dealing with the problem. If every component part of the nation claims the right of self-determination for itself, there is no one nation and there is no independence. I have already said that Pakistan is such an untruth that it cannot stand. As soon as the authors begin to work it out, they will find that it is not practicable. In any case, mine is a personal opinion. What the vast Hindu masses and the others will say or do, I do not know. My mission is to work for the unity of all, for the sake of the equal good of all.

PARTITION AND NON-MUSLIMS

Q. You have said in *Harijan* that "if the eight crores of Muslims desire partition, no power on earth can prevent it." Does it not strike you that 25 crores of non-Muslims, too, might have a say in the matter? Does not your statement imply that you put a premium on the opinion of the Muslims while underrating that of the Hindus?

A. I have only given my opinion. If the majority of Hindus or Christians or Sikhs or even Parsis, small though their number is, stubbornly resist the express wish of the duly elected representatives of eight crores of Muslims, they will do so at the peril of a civil war. This is not a question of majority or minority. If we are to solve our problems non-violently there is no other way. I say this not because the eight crores happen to be Muslims. I would say the same if the eight crores were any other community.

PAKISTAN AND AHIMSA

Q. I am a believer in *ahimsa* as well as Pakistan. How can I use the *ahimsa* principle for the realization of my ideal?

A. It is not possible to attain an iniquitous end by non-violent means. For instance, you cannot commit theft non-violently. As I understand Pakistan, I do not regard it as a worthy ideal. But since you consider it to be a worthy end, you can certainly carry on a non-violent movement on its behalf. This means that you will always

strive to convert your opponents by patient reasoning. You will impress everybody by your selfless devotion to your ideal. You will give a respectful hearing to what your opponents might have to say, and respectfully point out to them their mistake if they are in the wrong. Finally, if you feel that the people do not listen to you out of sheer bigotry and prejudice, although your cause is absolutely just, you can non-violently non-co-operate with the obstructionists. But you may not injure or seek to injure anybody and must, on your part, patiently endure any injury that might be done to you. All this you will be able to do if impartial persons endorse the justice of your cause.

A TICKLISH QUESTION

Q. I am a Hindu student. I have been great friends with a Muslim, but we have fallen out over the question of idol-worship. I find solace in idol-worship, but I cannot give an answer to my Muslim friend in terms of what may be called convincing. Will you say something on idol-worship in *Harijan*?

A. My sympathies are both with you and your Muslim friend. I suggest your reading my writings on the question in *Young India* and, if you feel at all satisfied, let your Muslim friend read them too. If your friend has real love for you, he will conquer his prejudice against idol-worship. A friendship which exacts oneness of opinion and conduct is not worth much. Friends have to tolerate one another's ways of life and thought even though they may be different, except where the difference is fundamental. Maybe your friend has come to think that it is sinful to associate with you as you are an idolator. Idolatry is bad, not so idol-worship. An idolator makes a fetish of his idol. An idol-worshipper sees God even in a stone and, therefore, takes the help of an idol to establish his union with God. Every Hindu child knows that the stone in the famous temple in Benares is not Kashi Vishwanath. But he believes that the Lord of the Universe does reside specially in that stone. This play of the imagination is permissible and healthy. Every edition of the Gita on a book-stall has not that sanctity which I as-

cribe to my own copy. Logic tells me there is no more sanctity in my copy than in any other. The sanctity is in my imagination. But that imagination brings about marvellous concrete results. It changes men's lives. I am of opinion that, whether we admit it or not, we are all idol-worshippers or idolators, if the distinction I have drawn is not allowed. A book, a building, a picture, a carving are surely all images in which God does reside, but they are not God. He who says they are errs.

IF YOU HAVE COURAGE

Q. My mother died last month. I have for a long time been following the practice of eating food cooked by Harijans. The orthodox did not like it, but they tolerated my practice. Three years ago, I accepted an invitation for a funeral dinner given by a Muslim friend on the occasion of his mother's demise. Now my mother is dead. My community have now boycotted all functions in connection with my mother's demise. What am I to do?

A. If you have courage, you will let the caste-men do their worst, but you will befriend your Muslim friend at all costs, and dine with him as often as is necessary. Such boycotts should not be feared at all.

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

Q. Hindus never object to Muslim music during Mohurram, or at any time. Why should Muslims object to Hindu music? Are the Hindus not entitled to safeguard their religious rights by every means?

A. This question deals with two questions of fact about which I know nothing. As to the third part of the question, Hindus are entitled to defend their religious rights not by every means but by every truthful, and in my opinion, non-violent means.

* * * *

Q. Are not the Hindus justified in organizing themselves, not for any aggressive action against Muslims or others, but for safeguarding their religious rights and stamping out such evils

as kidnapping etc., as also for the physical, social, moral and material advancement of the Hindu community?

A. I do not suppose anybody can possibly object to the organization such as the question mentions. I certainly do not object.

PEACE BRIGADES

Q. Do you desire the starting of Peace Brigades?

A. Certainly I do. Some time ago, I made certain concrete suggestions in that respect. I know very few will be found, at least in the beginning, to enlist in such an organization. A beginning may, however, be made by any small number or even singly. Such an organization cannot be conducted on the lines of democracy. It can only be a body of persons with a definite purpose. If the pioneers are the right sort of people, they may gather followers in due course.

BEEF

Q. The Muslim public need to be satisfied on a very important question. Will the Muslims be allowed to eat their national food—beef—under a Hindu majority Government? If you can satisfy the Muslims on this all-important question, a great deal of knots will be solved. You should give a straight answer to this question in your paper *Harijan*.

A. I do not know how this question arises. For, whilst Congressmen were in office they are not known to have interfered with the practice of beef-eating by Muslims. The question is also badly conceived. There is no such thing as a Hindu majority Government. If a free India is to live at peace with herself, religious divisions must entirely give place to political divisions, based on considerations other than religious. Even as it is, though unfortunately religious differences loom large, most parties contain members drawn from all sects. It is, moreover, not true to say that beef is the *national* food of Muslims. In the first place, the Muslims of India are not as yet a separate nation. In the second, beef is not their

ordinary food. Their ordinary food is the same as that of the millions. What is true is that there are very few Muslims who are vegetarian from a religious motive. Therefore, they will take meat, including beef, when they can get it. But during the greater part of the year millions of Muslims, owing to poverty, go without meat of any kind. These are facts. But the theoretical question demands a clear answer. As a Hindu, a confirmed vegetarian, and a worshipper of the cow whom I regard with the same veneration as I regard my mother (alas no more on this earth), I maintain that Muslims should have full freedom to slaughter cows, if they wish, subject of course to hygienic restrictions and in a manner not to wound the susceptibilities of their Hindu neighbours. Full recognition of freedom to the Muslims to slaughter cows is indispensable for communal harmony, and is the only way of saving the cow. In 1921, thousands of cows were saved by the sole and willing effort of Muslims themselves. In spite of the black clouds hanging over our heads, I refuse to give up the hope that they will disperse and that we shall have communal peace in this unhappy land. If I am asked for proof, I must answer that my hope is based on faith and faith demands no proof.

FEAR OF 'ISMS'

Q. You say that no such thing as Gandhism exists, and that what you stand for is nothing new. I am a Muslim. I see flashes of Islamic glory in Gandhism. As a student of theology, I see the grandeur of Hinduism and the vigour of Christianity amply expounded in Gandhism. It includes also to a considerable extent the chaste philosophy of the entire East. I search the pages of India's past history, but your creed I do not find. Why, therefore, is it not new, and why may it not be termed Gandhism for those of us who believe in you and, therefore, it?

A. I have a horror of 'isms', especially when they are attached to proper names. Even if all that you say of me is true, it does not make a new sect. My effort is to avoid not only new sects but even to do away with old and superfluous ones. *Abimsa* abhors sects. *Abimsa* is a unifying force. It discovers unity in diversity. All that you say

is derivable from *ahimsa*. To bring into being a new cult is repugnant to *ahimsa*, to the very experiment I am making. Thus you will, I hope, see that there is no room for Gandhism.

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